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# LECTURES

ON THE

## EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS

BY THE

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JORDAN AND THE RHINE," ETC.



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## INTRODUCTION.

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It is with great satisfaction that this volume of Lectures on the Epistle to the Ephesians is submitted to the American public. Its readers will find that it is a book of no ordinary merit. The characteristics by which it is specially marked are broad learning, shown in results rather than by processes; a remarkable knowledge of the Scriptures, by which light is made to concentrate upon the text under consideration from a multitude of related passages; and an intense fervor, enlightened by a rare spiritual insight. It is a book to be read, not hastily, but section by section, with attention and meditation, that its deep thoughts of things divine and spiritual may be grasped and made our own.

Believing that its readers will be glad to know something of the author of the book, we give a brief sketch of his life, now (A. D. 1883) in its seventy-third year.

William Graham is a native of Ireland, the son of a pious Presbyterian farmer of moderate means, the youngest of seven children. His mother also set him an example of godly living; so that he had the inestimable advantages of a home in which God was honored. He received the ordinary education of a farmer's son—reading, writing and arithmetic—and helped also in the labors of the farm until his fourteenth year. Then his mother's death changed his position and awakened in him new sentiments. In the most solemn manner, when about to die, she charged him to let no day pass without reading the word of God and engaging in prayer. That he might be able to keep this charge, he formed the resolution of having the New Testament always with him, and for twenty years and more it was as certainly in his pocket as was his pocket in his coat.

It now became necessary that young Graham should choose a profession. His first thoughts were for the ministry, but he had no means. The course of preparation would be long and expensive. A rich relative strongly advised him against the attempt, on the ground that he could make no money there. He was him-

self a magistrate. "No," said he; "go into the law; I may be able to assist you, and you are sure to succeed." So his brother took him to the most successful attorney in Ballymena, to make arrangements, if possible, for his entering into the profession of the law. As they entered the lawyer's office they heard him cursing his bailiffs so awfully for not selling a poor man's cow that they were frightened and went away. From that moment his purpose was fixed, and he set himself, with the help of God, to bring it to pass. He borrowed an English grammar, and soon mastered it. He then got an old Latin grammar, and speedily made some acquaintance with the rudiments of that language. Being now qualified for teaching in a country school, he secured a position and taught during the day, reading Latin and Greek at night. In this way he prepared himself for entering college, and continued to support himself thus during his five years of study in the Royal College, Belfast, and in the Assembly's Theological Hall connected with it.

In the college classes the country lad stood high, in some of them the highest, and in Hebrew he distanced all competitors, reading twice as much as had ever before been read in this class. Hebrew was, and still is, his favorite study.

Having passed his literary and theological examinations, Mr. Graham was licensed to preach the gospel by the Presbytery of Belfast, and was sent to Westport, in the West of Ireland, to revive, if possible, a dilapidated congregation there. Here he remained six months, when he was called to the parish of Dundonald, in a beautiful valley four miles from Belfast. Here Mr. Graham was ordained, and then retired for a fortnight to a cave on a bay on the northern shore of the county of Antrim, where was a cottage. There, with his Bible and Greek Testament, alone with God in prayer and meditation, he dedicated himself anew to the service of the Lord Jesus Christ.

He spent in Dundonald seven happy, laborious and successful years. The congregation had lapsed into Arianism and indifference and the church-building was almost in ruins, but the young pastor was full of zeal and faith. On Sunday he preached three times—twice in the church, and in the evening in the outskirts of the parish; in summer in the open air, and in winter in barns, school-houses and stores. He preached also often during the week, and was systematic in family visitation.

What was the result of these seven years of labor? The scattered members returned; strangers from a distance joined the church; the house was filled to overflowing; divine life, like spring after frost, burst forth in the various forms of conviction, conversion, prayer, praise, brotherly communion, missionary zeal and joy in the Holy Ghost. A young and vigorous eldership led in prayer-meetings; day-schools were established, and the central Sunday-school was one of the most successful in the county. Two stations where Mr. Graham preached regularly were organized into independent congregations. The old, dilapidated church-edifice was torn down, and a new and comfortable church was built.

In 1842, Mr. Graham was chosen by the Presbyterian Church of Ireland to open a mission for the Jews in the East. It was to be a united mission of Scotch, Irish and American Presbyterians. Arriving at Beirút, he met Dr. Wilson of Bombay, who had been appointed by the Free Church of Scotland to join him in choosing the seat of the mission. After examining the whole of Syria, they fixed on Damascus. The commencing of a mission in a fanatical Mohammedan city is accompanied with many and great difficulties, but Mr. Graham, afterward joined by Mr. Robson (who was murdered by the Mohammedans in the bloody massacre of 1861), maintained his ground. After twelve months of hard labor, he began to preach in Arabic. On the Jews no impression was made, but a number of believers were gathered out of the Oriental Greek Church and formed into a distinct community, and other happy results attended the labors of the missionaries. After five years, the ill-health of his family and the death of four children compelled Dr. Graham to leave Syria.

If the five years in Damascus were to Dr. Graham years of hard and self-sacrificing labor, they were also years of delight. He lived in the midst of Bible scenes. The forms of patriarchs, prophets and apostles were passing like shadows before his eyes. The language, the customs and the manners of the Bible lived again to him in the life of the people. Passing through Palestine, with reverence and awe he trod "those holy fields" consecrated by the footsteps of incarnate love. The land as well as its people was dear to him, so that he left Syria with great regret.

His next two years were spent in Ireland, preaching everywhere in the churches, striving to awaken and extend the missionary spirit among the people. Then he was sent to Hamburg to assist

Dr. Craig in his mission in that city. In three months he began to preach in German. Here he preached not only in houses and chapels, but also in streets, fields and pleasure-gardens. In this novel course he met many difficulties and dangers, and was at length arrested by the magistrate and forbidden to preach in this public way.

From Hamburg, Dr. Graham was sent to the South of Germany, and fixed on the university-city of Bonn as the seat of a new mission. In all things spiritual the place was cold and dead. Intellect was supreme, whilst love was lying in the dust and faith was timid and inoperative. Dr. Graham has labored in that field for more than thirty years with remarkable ingenuity and versatility as well as zeal. It has been his custom to preach three times every Sunday—twice in English, and once in German. On Wednesday he conducts a Bible class. On Thursday comes his weekly lecture, and on Friday a conversation-meeting in German. He opened a Sunday-school, the first in South Germany, and the mother of many others. His large library was put freely at the disposal of the public; he lectured in the university, making his linguistic and Oriental culture a means of reaching the students; he held in the coffee-gardens social reunions which were closed with religious services; he used the mail for reaching those to whom he had not access otherwise; and, in short, he has followed the apostle Paul in making himself all things to all men for the one purpose of saving sinners and strengthening saints. He still labors with unabated zeal in Bonn.

Dr. Graham's life has been a blessing to many, of different tongues and climes: may his printed words in this volume also be blessed to many!

JOHN W. DULLES.

PHILADELPHIA, February 20, 1883.



## AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

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I HAD intended to write an introduction to this noble Epistle embodying an historical account of the literature connected with it from the apostolic age till the present time, and had even collected some of the materials necessary for such a purpose; but then the thought arose in my mind, Would such a work tend more to the glory of God, or to show forth your own learning and research? Is it necessary for the exposition of the Epistle? Would it repay the toil, and, above all, would it interest the Christian reader? In seeking, as in the presence of the Lord, to answer these questions, I came to the resolution to abandon the idea of an historical introduction. I was anxious, also, to make the book as cheap as possible, that it might come into a wider circle of readers. As to the work itself, I have little to say. That it has cost me much labor and extensive reading I am most willing to confess. In composing it I had with me and around me the principal literary helps of both ancient and modern times. I have used them all freely, and I think I may say the

reader will find in this Commentary almost everything of importance contained in the Greek, Latin, English and German languages on the criticism of our Epistle. My aim was not, however, to give quotations and fill my pages with the names of celebrated authors (which is the easiest part of exposition), but to weave my own studies and the studies of others—the literature of the East and the West, of the Latins and the Greeks, of the English and the Germans—into one harmonious tissue of heavenly grace and beauty; one, yet various; harmonious as the light, yet manifold as the bow in the cloud. I have omitted no point of criticism, and yet criticism is not the great object of the book. No; my object is to open up the infinite fullness of our living Head to all weary souls, and unfold, as far as I see them, the glories of the God-Man, in whom and for whom I live and move and have my being. The Epistle is admitted to be one of the richest, fullest and noblest in the Bible; and all its treasures of wisdom and knowledge, of exhortation and love, of duty and faith, of the hopes of human nature and the mysteries of God, are valuable only as they centre in and flow from the living person of the Son of God, the Head of the Church and of the whole creation, to whom it is the purpose of God's Spirit to draw us, and in whom alone we find satisfaction and repose. I have opened up very fully the believer's standing in the Christ and the hopes and duties which naturally flow from it, and in doing so I have rendered, I believe, a

good service to the present generation of the Church, who are more occupied than they ought to be with material interests and worldly pleasures. Assurance of salvation is nearly banished from our churches, the doctrine of Christ's Headship is only faintly asserted, the hope of the coming and kingdom of the Redeemer is darkened, and, generally speaking, our Christianity is not that happy, unhesitating, victorious power of God in the soul which in the days of the apostles and our martyred fathers shed over the believing Church such brightness and glory. The cure for all this is our realized standing in the risen Head. We died in his death, we rose with him from the grave, and now, as believers, we are seated with him in the heavenly places. We look, not up from earth to heaven, but, according to our Epistle, we look down from heaven to the earth. We are in Christ, and from his heavenly throne we contemplate the vanities of this passing world. I confess it, then, one main design of this work is to enable thee to realize more clearly thy relations to the Lord and Redeemer of his Church. For this end I have felt the Epistle very helpful to myself in taking me out of the shallows of modern experience and theological commonplaces into the deep, pure ocean of divine grace and love. May God make it a blessing to many! And now to the Lord and Saviour of his Church be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.



# LECTURES ON EPHESIANS.

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## CHAPTER I.

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved.—EPHESIANS i. 1-6.

WE are now commencing one of the richest of the Epistles—one in which the Holy Spirit unfolds much of the purpose and love of God to the children of men. We are here permitted to drink from the fountain-head and refresh our souls from the waters of life. The author is God; the writer is a servant and an apostle of God; the subject is salvation; the persons interested are the whole human race; and, as to utterance and lofty eloquence, there is no composition known to man, in the Bible or out of it, containing more ennobling doctrines and moralities, more earnestness, variety and sublimity, than the Epistle to the Ephesians. The Church of Christ has always felt it to

be a peculiar treasure, and it would be easy to cite many testimonies to that effect from the writers of both ancient and modern times. May our hearts burn within us while we follow the loving, burning thoughts of this master in Israel! May our hopes and feelings rise with the great theme when he tells us of the riches of divine mercy, the dignity and glory of the redeemed Church and the love of Christ which passeth knowledge! May we be enabled to say at every fresh discovery of grace, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth"!

Yes, it is our Father that speaks to us from heaven, and we humbly and joyfully bend our ear to the gracious voice.

### I. THE APOSTLESHIP OF PAUL.

The word "apostle" designates one sent from God, and is a name of Christ himself (Heb. iii. 1). The twelve whom Jesus chose and ordained (Matt. x.) to be with him and to preach the gospel in his name are by way of eminence called "*the apostles*;" and they well deserve that distinguishing title, for they laid the foundations of the kingdom of God in the various nations of the world. The name is, however, given to several others in the New Testament—as, to Titus (2 Cor. viii. 23), Epaphroditus (Phil. ii. 25), Andronicus and Junius (Rom. xvi. 7), to Barnabas and Paul (Acts xiv. 14; ix. 15, 20). Paul names himself an apostle of Jesus Christ in many places (Col. i. 1; 1 Tim. i. 1; 2 Tim. i. 1, etc.). The twelve were called by the Lord Jesus Christ himself when on earth; they were his intimate friends and companions; he gave them their powers, commission and qualifications;

and to him they were in all things responsible. They were to be his witnesses, and more especially the witnesses of his resurrection; and hence they must have seen and known the Lord (1 Cor. ix. 1, 2).

It was the appearance of Jesus on the plain of Damascus which changed the fierce persecutor into the apostle of the Gentiles (Acts ix. 3). This was the turning-point of his marvelous history, and he consulted not with flesh and blood. He had now seen the Lord, and was in so far qualified to be his apostle. No doubt the external splendor which struck him to the earth was a type of an inward light which irradiated his mind and filled his heart with peace and joy. Mede considers the conversion of Paul as a type of the conversion of the Jewish nation and containing the following typical points: *First*, he was converted by the personal appearance of Christ, and so will the whole nation be at the second advent; *second*, his conversion was a great blessing to the Gentiles, and he is called the apostle of the Gentiles, and so the converted nation of Israel will be like life from the dead to the world—a new source of blessedness and grace to all the nations of the earth.

But what was the apostolic office? The apostles were called and appointed directly by Christ as the eye- and ear-witnesses of their Master. On this ground Matthias was chosen in the room of Judas (Acts i. 24-26), and Paul mentions, among the proofs of his apostleship, that he had seen the Lord (1 Cor. ix. 1) and heard the voice of the Holy One (Acts xxii. 14); so that he could be a witness unto all men of what he had seen and heard. They were qualified by the Lord and authorized to heal the sick, cleanse the lepers and raise the dead. In this

way the risen life of Jesus was manifested and dispensed to the nations; and it is remarkable that all their works were done in the name of the Lord Jesus, as his were done in the name of the Father (Acts iii. 6; iv. 10; iii. 16). They were inspired by God (Gal. i. 11, 12; 2 Tim. iii. 16), and endowed with the wisdom, faithfulness and strength necessary for the founding of the kingdom of God; but their chief and distinguishing function, which they shared with none, was the power of conveying the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands (Acts vi. 6; viii. 16; xix. 6). These wonderful powers were connected with the deepest humility and most abundant sufferings (Matt. x. 17; Acts v. 17, 18; John xv. 19; Acts xvi. 33; 2 Cor. iv. 10); so that the powers of the Holy Spirit working in them thus mightily—power over disease and Satan and death—brought them nothing but the opposition and hatred of mankind. Love was returned with hatred; patience, with cruel mockery; and their public labors, with scourging, imprisonment and death. Such is the way love conquers the souls of men. It is out of suffering and death that the triumphs of the gospel spread over the world; and this Epistle, so full of peace and love and heavenly hope, was written from the dungeons of Rome.

## II. THE SAINTS AT EPHESUS.

He did not write to the Ephesians, but “*to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus.*”

*Saint*, in both the sacred languages, signifies “clean,” “pure,” “without blemish” (Rom. xii. 1), and hence it is beautifully applied to the faithful followers of the Lamb who have escaped the pollution that is in the



world through lust (Acts ix. 13, 22, 32, 41 ; xxvi. 10 ; Rom. i. 7 ; viii. 27). Forasmuch, also, as the best and the purest of everything in the old dispensation was separated and set apart for the Lord, the word "holy" became synonymous with "consecrated to God;" and in this respect also believers are *saints*: they have given up the world; they have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts; and in body, soul and spirit they are dedicated to God.

These saints in Ephesus were a small part of the population of that luxurious city, and in the hum and bustle of a great capital they were little noticed, or noticed only to be despised. Such was the judgment of man, but the eye of God was upon them in their noble contendings, and the heart of Christ was responsive to their cries. Fallen and lost as we are, there is something within us, there are some remnants of the unfallen glory, which can never be satisfied with shadows. We long, if we knew how, to reach upward into the holiest of all, that we may find tranquillity and satisfaction in God. To such longing, thirsty souls the gospel comes as life from the dead; it puts them on the way of holiness by giving them an object to fix and draw out their affections, even Jesus Christ the Crucified; and the feeble lights and powers of nature are strengthened and brightened by the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Now that their strength is renewed, they may have some hope of final and complete victory in wrestling with the evils within and around them; in the act of believing, their eyes have been opened to sin and righteousness; God and his creature man appear to them in a new and more glorious light; what satisfied them formerly pleases them now no more; for the long-

ing, living soul will seek its native skies and be tranquillized with nothing but the enjoyments of its God,

“ And onward, still onward, arising, ascending  
To the right hand of power and joy never ending.”

The saint or believer in Christ has a different theory of life from other men. Most men are practically *materialists*, having this world for their home and riches for their god.

“ Eat, drink and die! What can the rest avail us?  
So said the royal sage Sardanapalus,”

is the very spirit of the thoughtless, bustling world. The saints at Ephesus had been led to see something higher than this in the life of man and the destiny that awaits him. Time was but the beginning of their existence; crowns of glory sparkled in the distance; God was their Father, Christ their Redeemer and the Holy Spirit their Sanctifier. Suffering and trial and persecutions of all kinds were nothing compared with the hopes that filled and sustained them. They had their sorrows, no doubt, but he was the Man of sorrows; they might well tread the thorny path, when their Master wore a crown of thorns. He was the Holy One of God, and they were called to be saints, holy, pure and consecrated to him in all things. They would share his fortunes, and in the life-boat with Jesus commit themselves to the shoreless sea. They preferred heaven to Asia Minor, and the temple of God above to the temple of Diana, whom the Ephesians so fiercely worshiped (Acts xix. 28).

Such were the saints in days of old, and such should they be still—men whose character is holy, whose home is in the skies, and whose supreme desire,

living or dying, is to glorify the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Are we such?

The apostle adds "and to the faithful in Christ Jesus," which shows that the apostle was not interested for the saints at Ephesus alone, but for all believers universally. It is a truly catholic Epistle, and we might say, with Coleridge, that almost every doctrine of Christianity may be found in it. It is, therefore, a treasure intended of the Lord for the special benefit of the whole Church in all ages.

### III. THE WISH OR PRAYER.

*Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ (ver. 2).*

The apostle begins with grace and ends with grace (Eph. vi. 24); and the themes which he so sublimely discusses are all but the manifold forms of the same principle, drops, showers, rills, rivers, from the ocean-fullness of divine grace—grace in the heart of God, which is election; grace in the cross of Christ, which is redemption; grace in the office of the Holy Spirit, which is sanctification; grace in the Church militant, which is obedience; grace in the Church triumphant, which is the reward of glory; grace everywhere, and grace for ever.

But what is this *grace*? It is the free favor and loving disposition of our heavenly Father, which disposes him to bless and receive his fallen creatures. Trace the word through all languages, and you are led, step by step, onward and upward to the fountain of divine benevolence. Fix your eye upon any one stream of the royal beneficence of God, be it ever so small, or ever so far removed from its source, or ever so dissimilar in

form to its fellows, you will find, if you follow it, that it brings you to the fountain of *grace*, the boundless ocean of divine goodness and love. Grace, in the Holy Scripture, is in every way connected with God. The Father is the God of all grace (1 Pet. v. 10); Jesus is the Author, Giver and Dispenser of grace (Acts xv. 11; 2 Cor. viii. 9; Rom. xvi. 20; 1 Thess. v. 28); and the Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of grace (Heb. x. 29), who dispenses to the Church his gifts and graces as he pleases (1 Cor. xii. 1-14). The seat of the divine Majesty is the throne of grace (Heb. iv. 16); the gospel is called the word of his grace, and believers are the children of his grace. The first word the young believer utters is "grace," and the oldest dies with the same word on his lips. It is this free grace which makes God the sovereign Giver and man the humble receiver; it is this which lends to the gospel its chief glory and renders speechless in the presence of God those who reject it. It is this which roots out the principles of pride and human merit and surrounds the mercy of God with unparalleled splendor, which annihilates the pretensions of a sacrificing priesthood and opens up to believers visions of inexpressible brightness and glory. The portals of heaven are thrown open to mankind; the river that flows from the smitten rock is free for all that are thirsty; and an amnesty free as the air and wide as the world is announced to the guiltiest rebels. This is grace. Jehovah makes no conditions with his creatures; he took no counsel with men in forming the plan of redemption; and the Sun of righteousness, like the sun of nature, sheds his beams over us whether we will or not. Incarnation, atonement, resurrection and medi-

ation are but steps in the manifestation of his grace. His acts are in keeping with his character, and neither in creation nor in providence does the divine majesty shine forth more gloriously than it does from the throne of grace.

The apostle connects grace with *peace*: "*Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*" *Peace* is a lovely characteristic of the gospel. Everything breathes peace and pardon to the believer. Jehovah is called the God of peace (Rom. xv. 33; Phil. iv. 9; 1 Thess. v. 23; 2 Thess. iii. 16; Heb. xiii. 20). Jesus is called "the Prince of peace" (Isa. ix. 6), and peace is in every way associated with his character and work. His name is the King of peace; angels sang over him in Bethlehem the song of peace; his gospel is the gospel of peace; his kingdom is the kingdom of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. He himself came and preached peace to them that were near and to them that were far off. His blood is the seal of peace. In one sweet passage it is said, "He is our peace;" and the ministers of the gospel are the messengers of peace.

But what does the word "peace" mean? It includes peace with God, peace of conscience and peace with our fellow-men; it declares that the veil between you and God is rent, and that you have free access to the holiest of all; it is the assurance to your trembling conscience that the enmity is taken away and that God is love. This is what we receive in believing—that which Jesus promised, and which the world can neither give nor take away. It is strong and perfect in proportion as the eye rests on Christ; it becomes weak and broken in proportion as you love earthly things. In the assur-

ance of this peace we brave the storms of life, and in the same tranquillizing conviction we fall asleep in Jesus. Sin alone can disturb this calm and blissful repose. It bids defiance to the rage of the persecutor, and is never more radiant than when in pain and torture it looks upward to the martyr's crown (Acts vii. 60).

These two blessings of grace and peace are "*from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*" The Socinian gloss which makes this sense "grace and peace from God the Father of us and of the Lord Jesus Christ" is forced and improbable; nor would it answer the purpose intended, for Christ is constantly represented in Scripture as the Author of grace and peace (Acts xv. 11; 2 Cor. viii. 9; 1 Tim. i. 14). It is therefore very manifest that Christ the Son is joined with God the Father in this prayer of the apostle, and both are represented as the fountain of spiritual blessings. I do not think the passage teaches that grace is to be referred specially to the Father and peace to the Son, for other scriptures attribute these blessings indifferently to both. The meaning is that grace and peace flow equally from the Father and the Son; they are both equally the fountain of blessing.

We ought not to forget the deep meaning of that name "*God our Father.*" Luther has observed that the glory of the Scriptures stands in the pronouns. Everything is personal and goes directly to the heart. It is not God, but *my* God; not Father, but *my* Father; not confession in the mass, but God be merciful to *me*, a sinner. This is living, saving, appropriating faith, as distinguished from a cold, dead, inoperative faith which only makes men and devils tremble. Chalmers

observes that a being of known power, but unknown purpose, necessarily terrifies us; and we add that the power and the purpose are both made known in the glorious name "God our Father." Here majesty and love are united, and the thunderbolts of Omnipotence are guided by a Father's hand. He is the great and terrible God before whom the sinner trembles, but he is, at the same time, the loving Father who invites the returning prodigal to his arms. In his Godhead we see the power that *can*, and in his paternity the disposition that *will*, protect us and bless us. He is our God and Father. His power and his love are around us. We are not creatures only, but children also, and sharers of the heavenly inheritance. We can say not only "God be merciful to me a sinner," but also "Our Father which art in heaven."

Consider now for a moment the title of the Son of God which stands opposed to the name "God our Father" in our text—"the Lord Jesus Christ."

*First.* The name *Lord* is the highest in the Greek language for denoting the underived and eternal King and Creator of all things. Hence the Seventy use it everywhere for the unutterable name "Jehovah;" sometimes for "Elohim," as Job xix. 21; xxxiii. 26; sometimes for "El," as Job v. 8; ix. 2; xii. 6; and sometimes for "Jah," as Ps. cxv. 17; cl. 6. This glorious title is in our text, and in the New Testament generally, applied to Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world. He is emphatically and in the highest sense *Kurios* or Lord (Mark xvi. 19, 20; Acts viii. 25; xix. 10; 2 Cor. iii. 17; Eph. v. 10; Col. iii. 23; 2 Thess. iii. 1-5; 2 Tim. iv. 8). He is *Lord*; he is *the Lord*; he is *our Lord* (Eph. iii. 11; 1 Tim. i. 2; 2 Pet. i. 1); he is

*Lord of all* (Rom. x. 12); he is the *Lord Jehovah* (Ps. cii. 25), who created the universe (Heb. i. 10); and believers are emphatically said to be “in the Lord”—that is, united to him—in their earthly trials and in their heavenly glory (Phil. iii. 1; 1 Cor. i. 31). *Lord*, therefore, applied to Jesus, denotes all power, dominion and authority over the Church and the creation.

*Second.* He is called JESUS, which is, in fact, the Hebrew *Jehoshua*, “Jehovah the Saviour,” so called because he shall save his people from their sins (Matt. i. 21). “Jesus” was a common personal name among the Hebrews, and is applied to Joshua (Acts vii. 45; Heb. iv. 8) and to Justus, the fellow-laborer with Paul (Col. iv. 11). It is therefore the human name of the Redeemer—the name which connects him with us—and is for that very reason the sweetest of all his names. It sounds sweet in a believer’s ear. As “God and Father” unites the ideas of power and love in the Godhead, so “Lord Jesus” unites in the Mediator majesty and condescension, lordly dominion and weeping tenderness. He is the lion and the lamb, the mightiest and the meanest, the sceptre-bearer of creation and the burden-bearer of a ruined world. All contrarieties and diversities meet and are harmonized in him. He is the possessor of all, and yet he has nothing. He stills the tempests and raises the dead, and yet he sits weary at the mouth of a well. He is the Ancient of days and the Infant of Bethlehem. He is the Son of God and the Son of the Virgin Mary.

These names, *Lord* and *Jesus*, taken from the most distant and contradictory objects, are intended to show that he is the *great Unity* or Head, in whom all things in heaven and on the earth are to be gathered up (Eph.



i.), in whom all promises and threatenings should find their proper expression, in whom the mortal and the immortal, the finite and the infinite, the conditioned and the unconditioned, should meet and be reconciled. This is the glory of the Redeemer, and it is in this character the saints delight most to contemplate him. The Lord has become Jesus, the Word was made flesh and God has been manifested in our nature (1 Tim. iii. 16). This is the sure foundation laid in Zion where the weary soul finds a resting-place. The Church is built on the person of Christ, the Rock of ages against which the gates of hell shall not prevail. Here the wanderer finds a home and the prodigal a Father. Eternity alone can expound the love that is contained in these two names—"Lord Jesus"—and, as for us poor guilty sinners, we can only *taste* and see that he is gracious.

But, *third*, he is also called in our text CHRIST, which means "the Messiah," the anointed King of Israel (John i. 41). This denotes his public, official character as the Prophet, Priest and King of his Church. All light centres in him as the anointed Prophet and Revealer; all pardoning mercy, as the atoning High Priest; and all power and majesty, as the victorious King. The three essential wants of our fallen nature are met and supplied in the Christ: our ignorance is cured, our guilt forgiven and our chains broken. He is the anointed One—the Prophet, Priest and King. These three great orders of nobility meet in him alone. The three lines of men—the prophets with their lamps, the priests with their sacrifices, and the kings with their royal splendor—have met in Bethlehem, where the Anointed of God was born;

and all their lamps, altars and thrones were but types and premonitions of his manifold fullness. He is the Christ, and their anointing came from and pointed to him alone.

Here we see the meaning of the name *Lord Jesus Christ*. *Lord* denotes his Godhead; *Jesus*, his manhood; and *Christ*, both united in one Mediator, the God-Man. Thus this glorious name, so often mentioned and so little thought of, is the very fountain of God's fullness to the children of men, and the foundation-stone on which the system of redemption rests.

We come now to verse 3, which contains—

#### IV. THE DOXOLOGY.

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.* This is the usual form of the doxologies in Scripture, and, as there is a point of criticism to be determined before they can be expounded, we shall examine a few of them particularly. In the Hebrew, as in the Greek and the English, the adjective always comes first (Gen. ix. 26; xxiv. 27; Ex. xviii. 10; Ruth iv. 14; 1 Sam. xxv. 32, 39; 2 Sam. xviii. 28; 1 Kings i. 48; v. 7 (in Heb. 21); viii. 15, 56; 1 Chron. xvi. 36; 2 Chron. ii. 12 (Heb. 11); vi. 4; Ezra vii. 27; Ps. xxviii. 6; xxxi. 21; xli. 13 (Heb. 14); lxxiii. 19 (Heb. 20); lxxii. 18; lxxxix. 52 (Heb. 53); cvi. 48; cxxiv. 6; cxxxv. 21; cxliv. 1; Zech. xi. 5; Ezek. iii. 12).

Now, we observe, *first*, in all these cases the adjective comes first in both the Hebrew and the Septuagint, exactly as in the English. This seems to be the uni-

versal law of these doxologies in both the Hebrew and the Greek ; nor can any argument be based on Ps. lxxviii. 19, where in the Greek Septuagint the noun comes first and the adjective follows, and that for the following reasons : (1) The Greek is a false translation of the Hebrew text ; (2) in the Greek it is falsely punctuated ; (3) the adjective “blessed” occurs twice, while it is found only once in the Hebrew ; (4) the adjective is in the first instance placed after, and in the second before, its subject ; so that, if anything can be made of the Greek text, the two forms must be translated differently ; (5) I am persuaded that the Septuagint is in this passage quite corrupt. For these reasons I refuse to admit that the Septuagint of Ps. lxxviii. 19 is an example of a doxology where the noun precedes the adjective.

But, *second*, we observe that when the verb *to be* is used, then the noun comes before its adjective in both the Hebrew and the Greek (1 Kings x. 9 ; 2 Chron. ix. 8). In the New Testament the same law holds. In 1 Pet. i. 3 there is no verb, and the adjective precedes the noun, as in our text ; so also in 2 Cor. i. 3 ; Luke i. 68 ; whereas in Ps. cxiii. 2 ; Job i. 21 ; 2 Chron. ix. 8 ; 1 Kings x. 9 the verb *to be* is used in both the Greek and the Hebrew, and therefore the adjective stands at the end of the sentence. According to this clear law of both the sacred languages, therefore, Rom. ix. 5 can never be translated as a doxology. All the learned labors of Socinians and rationalists are in vain as to that text ; and “God over all, blessed for ever” must, in spite of all their efforts, be applied to the divine nature of Christ.

But now what is the meaning of “*the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*” ?

Bloomfield and many others take "Father" to be expository of "God," and render the phrase, as our translators have done in Rom. xv. 6, "God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," which would make the whole phrase "even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" parenthetical, and the meaning of the verse would be, "Blessed be God (I mean the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ), who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ." But if Paul meant to say, "Blessed be God, who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," or, which is the same thing, "Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," there is a direct and appropriate Greek form which he would naturally have employed. Besides, in such a translation the "and" seems superfluous. De Wette, Kistemaker and others translate it "*Gelobet sei Gott und der Vater unsers Herrn Yesu Christi*," as if in the Greek the article belonged to *Father* and not to *God*, as we could say in English, "Blessed be God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," which gives a very different sense. Such also must have been the mind of Theodoret, who explains the text thus: "He is indeed our God, but he is the Father of our Lord." Indeed, most of the Germans insist upon it that such is the meaning of the passage. Harless thinks if both nouns referred to the genitive, the Greek particle ( $\tau\epsilon$ ) should have come before *and Father*, which hypereriticial finesse is refuted by 1 Pet. ii. 25 and other similar passages. But why all this labor and toil to avoid the idea that the Father should be called the *God* of Christ? Why not say with Theophylact, "He is both God and Father of one and the same Christ—his God as respects his human nature, and his Father in reference to his

divinity"? Surely, if Jesus Christ be really a *man*, the Father may be called his God. And does not Paul explain his own meaning in the seventeenth verse, where he distinctly calls the Father "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ"? and does not Jesus on the cross cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Is he not the son of man, and as such a *creature* of God? The glory of redeeming love is seen, not in the Godhead, but in the manhood, of Christ; he might have remained for ever in the bosom of the Father, but he preferred, out of love, to assume the form of a servant and be made in the likeness of men that he might magnify the law which we had broken and expiate our guilt on the cross. Hence, he is our brother and kinsman, the head and leader of the glorious army of the martyrs; and, though he is himself truly divine, he may surely, as the incarnate One, call the Father his God. Leaving now, therefore, these rough points of criticism, let us sum up the substance of the third verse.

*First.* The apostle begins with *blessing*. Three times in the one verse does he use the same word: God is the *blessed* one who hath *blessed* us with all spiritual *blessings* in heavenly places. Our condition as fallen creatures is *cursed*; the vengeance of a violated law is suspended over us; and the original malady, spreading like a poison through all the members of our race and through all the fountains of our being, hath laid us under the law of the curse; so that death must feed upon us, and sin and Satan have triumphed over us because we are cursed. He that created alone can deliver, and hence the gospel is called the glorious gospel of the blessed God; and the effects of it are to remove from our species, and from the earth their habitation, the

curse which a broken law has brought upon us. The *blessing* of the Creator was pronounced over us at the beginning (Gen. i. 28), and the stability of the new creation stands only in the blessing of God (1 Pet. i. 5). How beautiful and natural is this word of the apostle, "Blessed be the God who has blessed us"! It is the language of nature as well as of grace. He has removed the curse, and we will glorify his name; he has opened the gates of righteousness, and we will praise him with the companies of the blessed. He is the ocean-source from which all blessings flow, and the ocean-home to which all holy and blessed creatures must return with their songs of gratitude and praise. He is the *blessed* God, because he is the universal *Blesser*. *Blessing* was the angel-song in Bethlehem, and *blessing* was the last act of the Saviour as he ascended to the skies. The blessing of God pronounced upon the first Adam filled the old creation with the products of nature, and the blessing of God in the second Adam is to fill the new creation with the products of grace. Jesus and his Church are the Adam and Eve of a new world, and the holy command, more obligatory in grace than in nature, is still upon them: "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it."

*Second.* *The name of God* is here contrasted with the Old-Testament name, which is "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob"—a name showing out, as some think, by way of type, the doctrine of Father, Son and Holy Ghost in their relations to one another and to the creation; but in this name there is no *paternity*. He is their *God*, and they are his *people*—their Creator, King and Preserver, whom

they are bound to worship and obey. But his name in relation to the Gentile Church is "the God and *Father* of our Lord Jesus Christ." He is our *Father* as he was their *God*. Moses was the faithful servant over a household of servants, and Christ is the faithful Son over a household of sons (Heb. iii. 5, 6). The Sonship of Christ is manifold, and in every case the basis or foundation of ours. He is the eternal Son, begotten without a beginning, in whom the Father before all worlds saw his own glorious image, and with whom he could be delighted in the loneliness of eternity before there was a creation to be blessed or a fallen race to be loved and redeemed. Nor is this eternal generation a barren speculation. It is this which dignifies our families by showing us paternity and sonship in the divine nature itself; it is this which dignifies reason, speech, love and all the moral affections by showing that they exist in God himself. The Unitarian God could exercise no moral affections before creation. He had nothing to love. He is dependent on his creatures for the exercise of all the higher and nobler attributes which we call social or moral. The creation of such a being, if he created at all, would not be a great system with variety and unity infinitely and harmoniously blended, but a system of simple unity. It would not be a harmony, but a monotone, or at best a melody. But this doctrine of Sonship is threefold. Jesus is the Son of God from eternity, and this is the basis of our election in him before the worlds to the dignity of sons (Eph. i. 4-6). He is the Son of God by generation of the Holy Ghost (Luke i. 35), and this is the form and fountain of our regeneration by the same Holy Spirit of God. He is the Son of God by resurrection (Ps. ii.

7; comp. Acts xiii. 33), the first-born from the dead and the beginning of the creation of God (Rev. i. 5; 1 Cor. xv. 20; Col. i. 18), and this is the basis of the first resurrection, which is blessed and holy and belongs only to the children of God (Luke xx. 36). Thus our sonships by election, by regeneration and by resurrection find their antitypal forms in the development of sonship in the person of Christ. The Sonship of Christ, therefore, is no abstract, empty dogma, but a great comprehensive verity which unfolds wonderfully the relations and love of the Creator, and at the same time gives inexpressible dignity and glory to the redeemed Church. Oh, most sweet and blessed chain of love, which reaches from the throne of God to the bleeding cross—from the Father of lights to the poor children of men!

*Third.* But what are those spiritual blessings with which he has blessed us? These are the gifts and graces and manifold operations of the Holy Spirit (Rom. i. 11; xv. 29; 2 Cor. ix. 5; Gal. iii. 8, 9; Acts iii. 16), and are in Christ as their centre and descend to us from the heavenly regions or abodes. "The heavenlies" may indeed refer to states, blessings, or anything else, as well as to *places*, and expositors have been divided on the question since the apostolic age. Beza thinks we should give no decision on the subject; yet I feel persuaded that the *idea of place* is included in the Greek form of expression. (See Eph. i. 20; ii. 6; iii. 10; vi. 12.) John iii. 12 seems to me an exception, and not a key, to the other passages. These heavenly abodes, then, are the mansions which Jesus has gone to prepare for us in the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. All our glories are con-



centrated there. There are the golden harps, the crowns of righteousness and the white robes which are the righteousness of saints. The palms of victory grow there, and endless hallelujahs to God and to the Lamb resound through the celestial temple. There, too, are the heroes of the faith who fought and conquered through the blood of the Lamb—the holy apostles and prophets and the glorious army of the martyrs, who loved not their lives unto the death. Within that veil, in the holiest of all, we shall contemplate without a cloud the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, whom, not having seen, we loved, and through him, in the person of the Holy Ghost, we shall enter into fellowship with the adorable Jehovah, ever approximating, and yet ever at infinite distances from, the perfection of the all-glorious God.

We should think often of these heavenly mansions. Our friends are there, and beckon us to come; our citizenship is there, from whence we look for the Saviour. This is the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, where the glory of the Lord shines forth in all its splendor—the New Jerusalem of the Apocalypse, where the holy and the good have their dwelling-place with God for ever. There, too, are the fountains of life and the rivers of pleasure of which the Psalmist sings so sweetly; there is the rest of which the godly Baxter discourses so pleasantly, and the heavenly Zion of which David in his Psalms and Bunyan in his dreams have told us so much. There is the restored paradise which Augustine in his famous canticle *Felix cœli quæ præsentem*, etc., describes with such magnificence.

But let us never forget that all the glories of the heav-

only house, and all the blessings that flow to us from it, are treasured up *in Christ*. He is the fountain-head of blessing for the world; and through him, as Mediator, they are dispensed to the Church and to the world. Owing to him we have a right to these blessings, and through his mediation we are brought to share them. The Greek word for our “in” has, therefore, three different significations in this one verse—“with,” “in,” and “through.” He has blessed us *with* all spiritual blessings *in* heavenly places *through* Jesus Christ the Redeemer. The Christ is always, according to the doctrine of Paul, the centre of all the operations of God. *By* him the works of creation, providence and redemption have been accomplished according to the will of the Father, and *for* him (see Col. i. 16) the universe was created; so that the apostolic formula *in Christ* reveals to us the great doctrines of headship and mediation. *In him* the great purpose of Jehovah to create and redeem takes its root and finds its accomplishment; so that he is called the Alpha and Omega, the all-comprehending Head and Mediator, in whom the fullness of God (*pleroma*) is manifested to the creation (Col. i. 19; ii. 9; John i. 6).

#### V. ELECTION.

The apostle now proceeds to enumerate some of the spiritual blessings which our God and Father has reserved for us in Christ:

*According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love* (ver. 4). On this note the following observations:

*First.* The elector is the *Father*, to whom it belongs

to originate all things. The purpose of eternal love flows directly from the divine Mind as its heavenly source. He hath predestinated us to be conformed to the image of his Son (Rom. viii. 29). It is he who has chosen us from the beginning to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth (2 Thess. ii. 13); and Peter assures us that we who believe are “elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Christ” (1 Pet. i. 2). It is therefore clear that election is the peculiar act or work or office of the Father, even as sanctification and redemption are the works of the Spirit and the Son.

*Second.* The person in whom the election is made is the *Son*. We are chosen *in him* as the divine Mediator and predestinated Election-Head, in whom, by means of our union with him, we find a supply for all our wants, strength for our weakness, joy for our sorrow, light for our darkness, and eternal life for our all-sufficient portion at last. The little words *in him* express much of the will and way of God toward us. *In Jesus* we find the ground or cause of God's electing and redeeming; as Beza expresses it: “Through Christ and Christ's foreseen merits” God manifests his grace to us; nor does the text give the least hint of the condition which Chrysostom supplies—viz., “that we are elected on account of foreseen faith and good works.” We were elected *in him* because he is our Surety and had undertaken to redeem us by the sacrifice of the cross. In him all believers are included. In the divine purpose the elect and the Election-Head are contemplated as one—one vine, one temple, one family.

The head and the members, the vine and the branches, the bridegroom and the bride, the foundation and the living stones, are never separated in the purpose of God, forming, as they do, one great and magnificent unity, very beautiful and glorious—perfect, too, when the time of perfection comes, as the idea and purpose of the Father. This is *the Church*. Election is the basis of the Church, as predestination is the basis of a providence.

*Third.* As to the *date* of this election. It is before the foundation of the world. (Comp. Matt. xiii. 35; John xvii. 4; Luke xi. 50; Matt. xxv. 34; 1 Pet. i. 20.) This is the same as the expression “Before the ages or worlds” (1 Cor. ii. 7). (Comp. Eph. iii. 9; Col. i. 26; 2 Tim. i. 9; and Rom. xvi. 25.) This is the ancient love of God to his people of which the Scriptures are so full, and on which the believing soul delights to dwell. His love is no impulsive feeling, varying with the changes of the creature, but the steady, irreversible purpose of his grace, based on the life and death, the doing and dying, of the Mediator. We measure the strength of an affection by its permanency, and by the difficulties which it surmounts for the sake of its object. This ancient affection of the Godhead was placed upon his people before the birth of time; and in all the different ages and dispensations, in the successive dynasties and kingdoms, in all the events of providence as well as in the promises and covenants of grace, we see the gradual unfolding of that hidden love of his, until, in the person of the incarnate Redeemer, the difficulties were all surmounted and the Father almighty and his prodigal son might meet. This is the love which the soul delights to contemplate

—an effective love; a love that does not shrink back from impediments; a love worthy of God and necessary for the safety and dignity of his redeemed Church.

*Fourth.* The *purpose* of this election is very clearly stated in one passage: “*That we should be holy and without blame before him in love.*” *Holy* means “separated,” “consecrated,” “devoted” to God. He would have a loving, devoted, holy people, and for this end he elects them. They are chosen that they should be holy and without blame before him in love. His purpose in election is sanctification—that they should be *his* in the fullest sense of the word, his husbandry, his building, his temple, his living sacrifice, his fruit-bearing vine. They live a devoted life which the world cannot understand; they are separated from all other men in their hopes for the future life, and in their conduct toward God in this. *Without blame* means “spotless” (Heb. ix. 14), and is applied to the Saviour himself as the spotless, perfect, sacrificial Lamb (1 Pet. i. 19). (See Lev. i. 10; xxii. 19-23; Eph. v. 27; Col. i. 22; Jude 24; Rev. xiv. 5.) Such would be the character and life of the chosen people of God, and in so far as they come short of this they are destroying their own happiness and withholding from God the proper returns of his love.

Election is not an arbitrary, indiscriminating act of God in order simply to secure the final salvation of so many and no more. No! it is rather the sweet and loving purpose to prevent the ruin of all, and to secure by his own efficacious grace the means of saving any—viz., the faith which works by love and purifies the heart. By their fruits ye shall know them. The elect

of God are the holy and blameless ones, of whom the world is not worthy. Look not for the proofs of your election to the hidden counsels of God, but to your own visible life and conversation.

There is much meaning also in the phrase "*Before him in love.*" It is as much as to say, This holy and blameless life is no fancy picture, but a reality, and such a reality as can stand *before him*. If you wish to fulfill the requirements of this verse as one of the elect of God, your walk must be holy and blameless. This is the high end of your election, and they are deceivers and hypocrites who dare to speak of God's electing love while they are caught and captivated by the entanglements of the flesh and the world. Holiness is the end of election, while happiness, peace of conscience, and final glory itself, are subordinate and subsidiary blessings. The holiness of the Church is the earthly glory of God, and she glorifies him as much in her struggles and triumphs here as in her songs and hallelujahs above.

## VI. ADOPTION.

*Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved (ver. 5, 6).*

I have followed the common punctuation in the fourth verse because the sense is good and we are accustomed to the phrase "holy and without blame before him in love." It is not to be denied, however, that the weight of authorities and the natural construction seem in favor of connecting *in love* with the

fifth verse, thus: "Having predestinated us in love to the adoption of children," etc. This construction is strengthened by Eph. iii. 17, where, in the Greek, *in love* precedes the participle. If any one wishes to see this point formally argued, he should consult Stier. I deem the decision of little importance, and, therefore, proceed with the exposition.

*First.* Wherein does the *predestination* of the fifth verse differ from the *election* of the fourth? "Election" only, and always, refers to the Church; "predestination" refers to the Church and the world and the whole universe. It is a general, all-embracing principle. He elected us that we should be holy, and to accomplish this he predestined us to the adoption of sons. Election is a mere passive preference of some rather than others, while predestination is active, and includes the ideas of ordering, defining and controlling all things according to a settled purpose or plan. Election is the foundation of a Church, and predestination is the basis of providence. Election implies choice, predestination does not. The Church is both predestinated and elected, but there are many things ordained when there is no election (Acts iv. 28). In the Church, Jehovah is manifested as the God of electing grace and love; while in all history and providence, among the nations of the earth and in the different provinces of creation, he is ever present as the presiding, overruling and predestinating God. Prophecy and promise have mainly to do with the Church and the Church's Head; and without a controlling, predestinating Deity the fulfillment of the prophecies and the promises is neither possible nor conceivable.

*Second.* But what is this *adoption* to which we are

predestinated? It is the very first of the privileges which Paul ascribes to the Jewish nation: "To whom pertaineth the *adoption*, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever" (Rom. ix. 4, 5). In a wide sense, the Jews were nationally the children of God, and the principle of adoption was in their polity, for the Son of God, the Messiah, was the hope of the nation. They were God's peculiar people (Deut. xiv. 2), in whom the seeds of righteousness were sown which afterward were to fructify and fill the face of the world with fruit. But the adoption is the peculiar privilege and glory of the New-Testament Church, in which the incorruptible seed remains, because they are born of God. They have all become the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus (Gal. iii. 26); they are born, not of blood, nor of the will of flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God (John i. 13); by the baptism of water and the baptism of the Holy Ghost they are made partakers of the visible and invisible family of God—the kingdom of grace and the kingdom of glory. In the act of believing they become members of the household of faith and heirs according to the promises. God stands to them in the relation of a father; the law threatens them no more, for their Surety has borne its penalty; the Spirit that crieth "Abba, Father," in their hearts has sealed them unto the day of redemption (Rom. viii. 15, 23; Gal. iv. 5); and they are enabled with a well-grounded confidence to anticipate the heavenly inheritance.

*Third.* This adoption into the family of God is *by*



*or through* Jesus Christ. The Son is the medium of our becoming *sons*; nor is there any regeneration save through the Spirit which he gives. The work of Christ in our nature, his active and passive obedience—or, as the old divines expressed it, his *doing* and his *dying*—are the legal and formal grounds on which the Father proceeds in admitting members into his family and dispensing the spirit of adoption. Under the covert of mediation has the kingdom of grace been administered from the beginning, and the one Mediator is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. God has ordained us to the adoption of children *through Jesus Christ*, and in this special act we see the principle according to which the whole kingdom of grace is administered. *Through him*, God and man are brought together. He is the God-Man and the Man-God. On earth we behold him as God manifested in the flesh, doing the works and speaking the words and manifesting the character of God. To see him was to see the Father (John xiv. 9), and in him was the great Father's heart opened to mankind. He was, in one word, Emmanuel, *God with us* (Matt. i. 23). We follow him from Olivet to the heavens, and we see him there in a new and quite different character. He is now the Man-God, Man with God, glorified and on the throne of universal dominion. He is the glorified head of the redeemed race, the forerunner and model man to whose likeness all the rest are to be conformed—the first-fruits of them that slept, and the specimen to the angels and the universe of what manhood is predestinated to be. The angels behold humanity in the *form of God* as we beheld Godhead in the *form of a servant* (Phil. ii. 6, 7); and this wonderful double relationship

is expressed by the word "through," which refers, as all mediation must do, to both sides or parties. God reaches us *through* Christ, and *through* Christ we have access to God; the power, glory, majesty and love of God enter into him in the measure of Godhead, and reach us tempered and softened into the measures of manhood, such as we are able to receive. On the other hand, our prayers and supplications are by the intercession of Christ glorified into a divine incense worthy of the acceptance of the Deity.

*Fourth.* The two words *unto himself* have occasioned the commentators some trouble, and their sentiments are very various. But surely, looked at simply, the most common understanding can see no difficulty in this idea: "God has predestinated us unto the adoption of children to or for himself." Is it not a scriptural idea that the Church is the peculiar treasure and property of God—that he has taken it from among the nations, redeemed it for himself, and preserves it as his own purchased possession for ever? (See Ex. xix. 5; Deut. xiv. 2; Ps. cxxxv. 4; Tit. ii. 14.) I believe the accusative with the preposition is precisely the same in meaning as the dative of advantage or disadvantage. This grammatical principle is proved in the following passages: Matt. v. 13; John vi. 9; Acts ii. 22; Rom. xi. 36; 1 Cor. viii. 6 (here the words *to us* are the dative, and the following *to him* the accusative with the preposition); Rom. xv. 26; xvi. 6; 2 Cor. viii. 6; Gal. iv. 11; Eph. iii. 2. God, therefore, has dignified and honored the Church exceedingly by the two little words *for himself*, for he thereby claims her as his own peculiar treasure, elected, redeemed and endowed with the gifts of the Spirit for the express pur-

pose of showing forth his glory. His name is upon her; his spirit is within her; and her ceaseless task is to show forth his praise. Nor do I know a more healthy state of mind than that in which we feel ourselves to be his and not our own, bought with the price of his precious blood, and therefore bound to glorify God in our bodies and spirits, which are his.

*Fifth.* Note here, also, that this predestination and adoption are according to the *good pleasure of his will*. This is the mode and the measure of his working. The creature is not reckoned in the administration of his gifts; his own bounty and grace, not our wishes, determine the outflowing of his beneficence. We can find no higher, nobler origin for redemption than the good pleasure of God. It was his *will* to spare, and he spared us; it is his good pleasure to give the kingdom to his little flock, and they shall get it (Luke xii. 32). (Comp. 1 Cor. i. 21; Col. i. 20.) This is the self-limiting and self-determining will of God, called here *his good pleasure*, according to which all his purposes are formed and executed. Bengel says: "Beyond this *good pleasure* of God we are not to inquire either in the works of creation or our own salvation;" nor has Grotius any exegetical right to give the text this turn: "God will execute his decrees if men do what they ought." More scriptural are the words of St. Jerome: "This is his divine decree, that those who believe might have power to become the sons of God." Here, as in all Holy Scripture, Jehovah is all and in all. All that papists and others have taught about human merit and supererogation and perfect holiness in flesh before the resurrection is false and unscriptural; nor can such doctors have any very deep views of either the holiness

of God or the sinfulness of man. Oh no! When we see even our best actions in the light of the love and holiness of God, we cry out involuntarily, with the good old monk Celanus,

“ Rex tremendæ majestatis,  
 Qui salvandos salvas gratis  
 Salva me, fons pietatis !” \*

*Sixth.* We see here the *purpose* in which all his working, before time and in time, ends—“*that we might be to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved*” (ver. 6). The phrase *glory of his grace* is a Hebraism which our translators have rendered literally, but which means “his glorious grace.” (For similar forms, see Col. i. 27 ; 2 Thess. i. 9.) The purpose of electing and redeeming love is to form from among the sinners of mankind a people to the praise and glory of God. Christ hath received us (Rom. xv. 7), and therefore with one mouth let us glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ; and all the promises are in him yea and amen, unto the glory of God by us (2 Cor. i. 20). The glorious grace of God shines forth in the struggling, wrestling Church more than anywhere else in the creation ; for it is there put to the severest tests, and, like the rainbow in clouds and storms, it is enhanced by the contrast. As sure and so far as God is the Ruler and the Governor of the world, the great end of every creature must be his glory ; and, as *grace* is the form in which his glory has shone forth most brightly on this earth, the highest aim of the redeemed

\* “ King of tremendous majesty,  
 Who savest *gratis* those who are to be saved,  
 Save me, thou Fount of piety !”

creature in all states and conditions of being should ever be “to the praise of his glorious grace.” We are to shine, but the light is from him; and all the fruits of the tree of life are produced by his good Spirit (Gal. v. 22). It is always and everywhere *grace*, and nothing but free grace, in our pilgrimage to the heavenly city—grace in Egypt to break our chains, grace in the wilderness to give us manna from the skies and water from the rock, and grace brightening into glory as we pass over the Jordan into the Promised Land. Be ours, then, the noble office to show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light—to let our light so shine before men that others, seeing our good works, may glorify our Father which is in heaven.

This *charis*—“grace”—is the deep ocean in the heart of God from which all promises and covenants of mercy proceed; from which the divine Redeemer himself proceeded (John iii. 16) when he came forth to bless us; and from which must proceed, both in eternity and in time, everything whereby the fallen creation is glorified and blest.

The apostle adds: “*It is by this grace, too, he hath made us accepted in the Beloved.*” Jesus, the beloved Son of God, is also the Beloved of our souls; yea, he is the chief among ten thousand and altogether lovely. The purpose of the Father’s love takes effect in him. *In the Beloved* shows the circle in which grace works, and is, at the same time, the true characteristic of the accepted ones. They are beloved in the Beloved, anointed in the Christ, built upon him as the foundation-stone and crucified with him when he died. *In him* shows the bond of union which unites them to one

another by uniting them to the living Head from whose love neither death nor life, nor things present, nor things to come, shall ever be able to separate them (Rom. viii. 38, 39). They possess the residue of the Spirit, because they are *in him*; they are justified, sanctified and shall be eternally glorified, because they are *in him*. They have power over the flesh to crucify it, over the world to despise it, over Satan to resist and conquer him, because they are accepted *in the Beloved*. Sin has lost its power over them, the law of God does not threaten them, the worm of conscience does not sting them any more, but love eternal draws them upward toward heaven, and the Holy Ghost seals them unto the day of redemption, and they shall never perish, nor shall any pluck them out of the Father's hand; for he has made them *accepted in the Beloved*.

## CHAPTER II.

In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.—EPHESIANS i. 7-14.

THE apostle now proceeds to a new and equally glorious theme. He has told us of the Church and the eternal grace and love which have been manifested to her and to all men in these last times; of the names and relations of the Father and the Son, both to each other and to us; so that the sinner may have confidence in the power and the love of an all-ruling yet sin-pardoning God. He has told us of the election of the Father as the fountain of divine mercy, of the adoption and high destinies of the family of God; and he now opens a new page in the book of life by bringing prominently before us, in the seventh verse,

## I. THE DOCTRINE OF REDEMPTION.

*In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.*

*First.* The first great idea of the text is contained in the words *in whom*—namely, *in the Beloved*—whereby we learn that the person of Christ is the only and everlasting source of human salvation. There is nothing ideal, nothing shadowy or mythical, in the revelations contained in the New Testament. A personal God created and rules the world; a personal, voluntary, self-emptying Redeemer (Phil. ii. 7) is presented to our faith and hope in every page; and the indwelling Spirit pervades the new creature with the fullness and blessedness of a divine personal presence. We are not shadows, and shadows cannot satisfy us. We are persons—viz., spirits now dwelling in flesh and blood, with the painful and lacerating convictions which attach to rebels against the majesty of Heaven. Nor is it possible—such is our nature—that the soul of man, struggling and wrestling with its evil conditions, but still conscious of its work and destiny, should ever find rest and satisfaction save in the fellowship and fullness of a personal God.

Sin is no trifle, as we may see from the ruins it has wrought. Death is a sad and terrible reality before which we tremble exceedingly, and which, like a cleaving curse, follows us everywhere and turns the beautiful world into a field of blood. Satan, the head of the fallen, and the first mover of sedition, loses nothing of his power and malignity as he gains more cunning from experience. He is still the roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour (1 Pet. v. 8). Such being the state of



things, it becomes instantly manifest that deliverance can never be obtained by doctrines or systems of doctrines, however holy and true they may be. No, never! The law of the Eternal is broken, and power almighty holds us in chains. God the immutable is not a man that he should lie, but the righteous ruler of a universe in which the universal law is obedience. It is not a new doctrine which we need, but *a new work*—a work which can in some way consistently with the character of God avert the punishment which threatens us, fortify with fresh sanctions the law which we had broken, and, reconciling justice with mercy, open up the fountains of grace to mankind. All this we have *in the Beloved*. In his person we have all that the heart can desire. He has indeed revealed to us much of the nature and character of the Father, but not so much in the way of teaching as in his life. “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father;” and most certainly the main object of the Son of God, in the flesh, was not *to teach*, but *to do*, and *to die* as the law-fulfilling righteousness and sin-atonement propitiation for his people. His doctrines drew their importance from his work, and his work from the dignity of his person. Abstract notions are not faith. Our minds may be filled with true and beautiful systems of theology, while yet the divine fire of faith has never been kindled, and the reason is that the person of the Redeemer is not the centre of our religion. Not in doctrines, but in *the Beloved*, does the soul find its rest and home; not in the crucifixion of Christ do we glory, but in Christ Jesus and him crucified; not in the creeds of the first ages, or of all ages, do we find the object of faith, but in the incarnate Redeemer himself, to whom all creeds

and all ages and all Scripture bear witness, without whose living personal presence all formularies and theologies are but empty nomenclature—beautiful, it may be, but useless as the casket when the jewel is gone or as the temple when the god of the temple is no longer there. This, then, is the idea with which the apostle commences our passage. The Beloved of our souls is presented to our faith as the Fount from which mercy flows, the Treasury of the Father's fullness to the creation, and the life-giving Head of the Church.

*Second.* The next truth contained in our text is in the words *we have*. It is not we "may have" or we "shall have," but *we have*—that is, we do really possess the blessings mentioned in the text. *In him* connects the person of the Redeemer with the original purpose of Jehovah in election, and *we have* connects all believers with him as the recipients of his manifold fullness, and we shall see afterward that the economy of the future ages (ver. 10) is to be headed up in him also; so that all things that pertain to the Church or the creation, the past, the present and the future, with all their varieties and infirmities, are harmonized in him—are summed up and recapitulated in Jesus Christ the Beloved. But, setting aside for a moment the two extremes—the past and the future—let us attend to the vinculum which unites them: *we have*. Luther uttered a strong truth in these words: "*Wer Christum hat, der hat alles; wer Christum nicht hat, der hat gar nichts*" ("He that has Christ has all things, and he that has not Christ has nothing"). This witness is true. Faith in the Lord Jesus makes us partakers of his merits; so that, being united to him in love, washed from sin in his blood and arrayed in the robe of his righteousness,

we can say, not in presumption, but in lowliest humility, "*Christ is ours;*" we have redemption through his blood—the forgiveness of sins; we are one with him, and neither death nor life shall separate us from his love.

*Third.* But what is this *redemption*? How does the Scripture speak of it? What blessings does it confer on the believer? "Redemption" signifies the "buying back of slaves," and necessarily presupposes the condition of bondage (Rom. i. 28; Eph. ii. 3-5). These texts show us very clearly that the wrath of God rests upon the transgressor, and that his law demands punishment. Nor was this all. The ruler and god of this world had brought us under his dominion (Acts xxvi. 18; Eph. iv. 18; 2 Cor. vi. 14). This is the condition of the sinner. He is alienated from the life of God by reason of the ignorance that is in him, nor can any efforts of his own remove the burdens of the curse. The world before the Flood groaned under the load till God and the earth could bear it no longer, and the flood came and swept them all away. Nor did the awful warning work any effectual cure, for the waters were hardly subsided when, from the fathers of the new world, the corrupting plague broke forth again in streams deep and black as hell. The nations became corrupt, and even the separated people to whom the Lord revealed his wonders, and upon whom he has showered so many blessings, became apostate; so that when Jesus came among them, Jerusalem, the city of God, had become a synagogue of Satan.

Such was our race, and hence the *necessity* of redemption. If there be a holy God in heaven, it was impossible that he could delight in such a world as

ours. Nor was it merely the effects of our own doings which impeded every free movement and entangled us more and more at every step; there was also that foreign bondage, referred to already, which made it necessary that the Son of God should be manifested in the flesh, that he might destroy the works of the devil (1 John iii. 8; Heb. ii. 14; John xvi. 11). Sin was our bondage, and Satan the slaveholder, who, knowing well that we had sinned, thought we were his for ever, saying in his heart, "They have sinned, and they are mine; for the law of the unchangeable God is against them, and the soul that sinneth, it shall die." Thus Satan, strengthening himself in the holiness of God and the unchangeability of his law, thought that the kingdom of darkness would be perpetual and universal; for he knew not the counsels of God nor the depth of divine compassion. He dreamed not that the law could be vindicated and the holiness of God doubly honored, and at the same time mercy in richest munificence proclaimed to the sinner. He knew not that it was the purpose of God from the beginning to thwart all his malignant devices; so that darkness should make way for the light of life, sin for holiness, the serpent for the Serpent-bruise, and out of death itself, the master-work of Satan, there was to arise a kingdom of life and immortality. Now, the way in which a divine purpose is accomplished is not by a violation of duty or a stroke of the thunderbolt, but in the way of moral fitness and progressive development; so that righteousness might be seen voluntarily abandoning corruption and triumphing over it, love conquering hatred, and God glorified in the hearty obedience of a willing people.

Here comes in the action of our text. The seed sown in Paradise begins to ripen; the hope which animated the Jewish nation, and through them was in part disseminated among the Gentiles, begins to brighten more and more. The line has been defined, the tribe and the family distinctly named, the character of the coming Deliverer, and his very name, announced. His birthplace is to be Bethlehem; a virgin is to be his mother; the time approaches; old Simeon shall live to see him; and now he is come—the babe in the manger, the promised Deliverer in whom the purpose of love is to attain its full and final development. This, says Paul, is the Saviour of the world, in whom we have redemption *through his blood*. His blood is the ransom which he pays for us (1 Cor. vi. 20; vii. 23; Matt. xx. 28; Mark x. 45; 1 Tim. ii. 6; Tit. ii. 14), that the claims of the law may be satisfied and the power of the slaveholder broken. Hence the apostle adds the expository words “the forgiveness of sins.” The apostle teaches the same doctrine in more general terms when he says, “Without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins” (Heb. ix. 22). The first blessing, therefore, connected with redemption is the forgiveness of our sins. This is, indeed, what we most needed, and it is the gift which glorifies God most of all. He does not appear so glorious on the throne of creation as on the throne of grace. Nothing but forgiveness can still our inquietudes or make us look with tranquillity to the judgment-day. Here, then, is the fountain opened in the house of David for sin and for uncleanness, to which the poorest and the vilest are invited to come. Here, around the Man of sorrows—bleeding, dying and conquering in death—we take our place; nor will we re-

move our gaze from the cross and the Crucified till our eyes fill with tears and our hearts overflow with love.

*Fourth.* Let us now mention, briefly, *various particulars* connected with this redemption, in order that we may obtain, if it be possible, a comprehensive view of the plan and intention of God in it and in us.

(1) The *person* is the Lord Jesus Christ, and there is no other name given among men whereby we can be saved. His blood alone can wash away our sins; and the reason is that he is the Son of God, he is the appointed Lamb, and there is no other sacrifice for sin. In him is life, and the life is the light of men. All the methods of obtaining pardon and quieting the conscience by means of human merit are simply devices of the devil. We have redemption in his blood, even the forgiveness of our sins, according to the riches of his grace.

(2) Redemption is *twofold*—redemption by *price* and redemption by *power*, corresponding to his coming in the flesh and his coming in glory. We have the one, and we wait for the other. The price is paid and the pardon sealed, but the inheritance is not yet clear, nor the usurper cast out, nor the last enemy destroyed. But Jesus is coming again, and the enemy shall be shut up for a thousand years and the whole world filled with the glory of God. This is redemption by *power*, called also the redemption of the body (Rom. viii.), for which we are to wait and pray patiently. Here again we see how everything is connected with the person of Christ and finds its importance and value in him. The two comings of Christ, the cross and the crown, are the two centres of all Christian truth, the poles in the Script-

ure firmament around which the stars of promise and prophecy revolve.

(3) The *importance* of the doctrine of redemption is seen in many ways. We see it in the frequency with which it is mentioned in the Scriptures, where the cross is the great attraction in which the Church of God, with the apostle of the Gentiles, rejoices to glory. It is seen in the various names of the Redeemer which refer to him as the propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of the world; in the offices which he sustains as Mediator; in the innumerable types, figures and allusions of Scripture which find their force and significance in his redemption. It is seen in the dignity of the Person that died, in the number and value of the souls he has saved, in the wretchedness of the state in which he found them, and in the holiness, blessedness and glory to which he has lifted them up. The Author of it is great, the end of it is great, and the means by which it is accomplished are great and wonderful. Behold the nations that are still in ignorance, brutality and barbarism—the nations that know not his name—and think what he has done for us. Ask the angels who accompanied him upon earth and at Bethelchem or the grave: they will tell you the importance of redeeming love; ask the Church of the first-born who are written in heaven what they think of the person and work of the Redeemer, and they answer with the new song, “Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth” (Rev. v. 9, 10); or ask a fallen spirit

whose day of grace is past, and he may be able to tell you the importance of redeeming love. Oh, my brother, this love is presented to thee now. For thee the great Victim died. Oh, was there ever love like this love? was there ever condescension like this? O my God and Father, is all this really true and all for *me*? Thou hast, then, indeed thought of *me*, and my sins were there when the Saviour died. Help me, then, great God, to say, "From this day, and for evermore, I give myself to thee, to thee—to thee alone! Thou art my God, and it is and shall be my great end to please and love thee."

(4) The *basis* on which the doctrine of redemption rests is found in the nature and constitution of man. It is often asked by skeptics and others, "Is it possible that a *righteous one* should suffer for the sins of the world? Is it *just* that the righteous should suffer for the guilty?" Answer: "It is possible and right and in harmony with the whole history of nature and Providence."

Consider the following *facts*: The race of man was created in a unity; men did not arise all at once by the fiat of the Creator in their distinct personalities like the angels: we were created in a representative head. This is a fact which cannot be doubted or denied. It is a fact, too, that we all fell in the fall of this head, and the curse of sin and death flows over us all since that fatal day. It is a fact that the nations and kingdoms of the world are blessed or cursed in the providence of God on the same principle of "THE MANY IN THE ONE." In Shem a whole race was blest; in Ham a whole race was cursed; and Gen. xvi. 12 is the characteristic of the Ishmaelites unto this day. The Jewish nation were



chosen in Abraham, and the one holy people was taken to be the means of blessing to all the Gentiles. It is so in all our relations of life, and we can no more alter it than we can raise the dead. A whole family is blest in a good father or cursed in a bad one; and so it is with pastors and churches, with kings and nations. Now, if you lay all these facts together, you will find that when God ordained grace and salvation to the many through the life and death of THE ONE, he was acting out the very principles according to which he created and governs the human race. As to the *innocent* suffering for the *guilty*, the fact is too common to require any consideration here.

(5) As to the *fullness* of the redemption made by Christ, we have the words of the text to assure us that it is "*according to the riches of his grace.*" He does not measure his gifts by either our wishes or our wants, but, having opened up the fountains of his mercy, he will show to the angels and the whole creation how high, how beautiful, how glorious, his grace can make us. He is rich in mercy. The power which garnished the heavens and the love which gave his Son to die are united in "*the riches of his grace.*" This is the only measure which a sovereign God could give. His own spontaneous bounty is the rule of his conduct in blessing his creatures. This is reiterated and strengthened in the eighth verse: "Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence."

The word *wherein* is a Greek genitive by a rule called *attraction*, and refers, undoubtedly, to "grace," but the form it stands for is not so easily determined. If we take the verb "abound" in its natural, intransitive meaning (John vi. 12; Phil. iv. 12, 18; Luke xv.

17), we must take the pronoun in the nominative case, as Jerome did: "*Quæ superabundavit in nobis*" ("According to the riches of his grace *which abounded in us*"); and so also Luther translates: "*Welche uns reichlich wiederfahren ist.*" De Wette and others take the verb in its active sense (see 1 Thess. iii. 12; iv. 1) and the pronoun in the accusative, thus: "*Welche er überschwenglich gemacht*" ("Which grace he has made exceeding abundant toward us"); while Calvin, our translators and others take the pronoun to be for a dative, and translate: "Wherein or in which he has abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;" and it might be argued, as others have done, that there is no *attraction* in the case, for the Greek verb may govern a genitive, as is proved by Luke xv. 17. All these varieties make no essential difference in the sense. Those who connect the words "in all wisdom and prudence" with "having made known," in the ninth verse, pervert the entire meaning of the passage; for the apostle is not speaking of the modes of making known the divine will, but of the superabounding grace of God. The meaning is, "In the redemption through the blood of Christ, God has manifested supreme wisdom and prudence." Harless and Olshausen indeed assert that the phrase "in all wisdom and prudence" can never be applied to God, and consequently they change the entire sentence and supply what they deem requisite to complete the sense. But is this interpretation? It is very like making Scripture. But why can we not say that God has manifested all wisdom and prudence in the redemption of the world through Christ? All wisdom is supreme wisdom (*summa sapientia*), and it has surely been manifested

more fully in the system of redemption than anywhere else. Is it not through the redeemed Church that Jehovah intends to make known his manifold wisdom to the angels and principalities of heaven itself? (Eph. iii. 10.) That *prudence* may be referred to God is clear from Isa. xi. 2; Jer. x. 12; Prov. iii. 19; 1 Kings iii. 28. The passage therefore teaches that the wisdom and the prudence of God were in the highest and noblest manner displayed in the work of redemption, nor will any one to whom the cross is dear find much difficulty in receiving this truth.

## II. THE DISPENSATION OF THE FULLNESS OF TIMES.

*Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated, according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory (i. 9-14).*

This is the subject of our passage from the ninth to the fourteenth verse, and we are now to set ourselves with all diligence to contemplate this plan which God has devised for the establishing and heading up the creation in Christ.

*First. Having made known the mystery of his will.* There are some things which we can know about God without any divine revelation, and these are not revealed to us in the Scriptures; they are taken for granted as already known (Rom. i. 2; Gen. i. 1). His eternal power and Godhead are written on the works of his hands—on the earth and the sea; on the sun, moon and stars; and on the whole creation—so that idolatry and pantheism are without excuse; and every intelligent being is bound from the visible universe to recognize and adore Him who

“ Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,  
 Glows in the stars and blossoms in the trees,  
 Lives through all life, extends through all extent,  
 Spreads undivided, operates unspent.”

But, while nature teaches clearly the fact that creative power exists, how little does it teach us of the nature and of the attributes of God! We look up to the starry sky and tremble before the *power* of the Creator, but, as touching our own state and condition, we can learn nothing of his *will*, his *disposition* toward us; and therefore, the more sublime our conceptions of his power and majesty, the more overwhelming must be our terror and suspicion. When the power is manifest and the purpose unknown, we cannot feel repose. We seek a loving heart that can be interested in us; else the thunderbolts of divine Power may either fly at random, or perhaps they may be directed *against* us. Nature reveals the Creator and the Bible the Father, and both books are necessary to illustrate the character of Jehovah. He has *made known* the mystery of his will in the Scriptures generally, but more especially in his Son Jesus Christ.

*Second.* This revelation is “according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself before the world began.” The works of creation and providence, taken in their widest sense, are but the outward and visible manifestation of the all-comprehending purpose of God; but the form which this purpose takes in regard to the Church and the Church’s Head is *eudokia*—the good pleasure of God, the purpose of love, the fullness of Jehovah’s mercy to mankind.

The word which we render *purpose* has two significations in Scripture. It means “exhibition,” and is applied to the show-bread (comp. LXX. and Heb. text, Ex. xxxv. 13; xxxix. 36; 1 Kings vii. 48; 2 Chron. iv. 19) which was placed in order before the Lord upon the table in the holy place. So Jesus Christ is the true temple of God, in which the ages and dispensations of the Church and the world are arranged and exhibited in outward reality. In him the whole system of providence, from the beginning, is harmoniously arrayed, like the twelve cakes on the holy table. The seeds of life, which in the form of promise and revelation were sown into our world at different times, take root and flourish in him; and, as *nature* does nothing by fits and starts, so *grace* also, in the development of its strength and majesty, moves onward through the ages in an orderly and gradual manner, manifesting as it is needed more and more of the fullness of Christ. But the word denotes more frequently, as in our text, the *purpose* from which all future arrangements and developments flow (Rom. viii. 28; ix. 11; Eph. iii. 11; 2 Tim. i. 9). Our text tells us this purpose was formed in the mind of God himself—that is, God the Father as distinguished from the Son. Now, it is remarkable

that the *election* (that part of the *purpose* that relates to the Church, Eph. i. 4; 2 Tim. i. 9) is referred to the *Son*, and not to the Father; and this only shows that the purpose of God—so far as it refers to the *Church*, so far as it carries in it the seeds of *grace*—can never be contemplated apart from the Redeemer, through whom alone, as Mediator, the divine mercy flows.

*Third.* The design of this plan or purpose is “*that in the dispensation of the fullness of times*” (Greek “the times”) “*he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on the earth, even in him.*” The word translated *dispensation* is *economy*, a Greek word which signifies “the law of the house,” and means the plan which a father lays down for the management of his household—the house-law; and the apostle assures us that God is *Econome*, or Householder; that Jesus Christ, his Son, is the Head or Steward, under whom it is his pleasure to gather together all things which are in heaven and in earth. The Church Fathers, probably from this passage, apply the word “economy” to the incarnation of Christ, because that was the great fact which brought him into union with the family of God, and is, indeed, the most central truth in the system of grace and the one which gives character and importance to all the rest. The first truth taught, therefore, is this: “God has a great family, and he now wishes to make known the law of his house;” his eternal purpose had respect to this economy; as its end, the fullness of the times is to be subordinated to this fatherly design. The word *pleroma*, whether you take it as “fullness” or “complement,” designates the whole series of ages during which the Father remains working among the

nations to subdue them to Christ (Ps. cx.). Jesus Christ is *the Head*, in whom all things are to be recapitulated and established. The neuter *all things* is not used here, as some think, for the masculine "all persons," as if the Headship of Christ referred only to the Church; for the word of God assures us that all power in heaven and in earth is given him; and in Eph. i. 22 he is declared to be Head *over all things* to the Church, which is his body—the fullness of him that filleth all in all. He is the Head *of* the body and the Head *over* all. The Church is united to the risen King with bands of love which nothing can sever (Rom. viii. 35), and the whole created universe is subjected to his control. The temple of creation is broken and dilapidated by the fall; sin has marred its beauty and rent it to its foundations; and the office of Christ, as the Head of the Church and the universe, is to reorganize what was decomposed and re-collect the scattered fragments—as Beza expresses it, "*Summatim recolligere, partes dissectas et divulsas in unum corpus conjungere.*" This is the purpose of the Lord, and it gives importance to the work and mediation of Christ. He is the Head and Restorer in whom the divine purpose shall be revealed and perfected.

It is true, indeed, that at present we see but little of the fullness of this purpose revealed; but we see everything in preparation for its speedy accomplishment. The law of the Creator has been vindicated, so that, without any violation of royal rights, mercy can be extended to the rebellious race; the union between the Creator and the creature has been formed in the person of the incarnate Son, so that a living mediating

Head between Jehovah and his creatures has been actually established in the heavens. The proclamation of the gospel, through the mediation of the Redeemer, has resulted in the calling and sanctification of the Gentile Church; and when the number of his elect shall be completed, the day of God shall reveal more and more of his wondrous purpose of love, into whose various parts, as the great drama is being transacted on the theatre of this world, the holy angels desire to look, and to learn the manifold wisdom of God.

The *fullness of the times* can by no means be limited to the present dispensation. On the contrary, the gathering together of all things in the Christ has respect mainly to the times of the restitution of all things at the advent of the Lord, called also the times of refreshing (Acts iii. 19, 20, where *when* should be translated "that" or "in order that") which are to fill every heart with joy and the whole earth with the glory of the Lord. Then the creation, now groaning and longing for the Deliverer (Rom. viii. 19-24), shall, under the manifested Headship of the Mediator, be brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God. What further steps there may be in the progress of the divine purpose after the coming of Christ and the resurrection of the saints, after the millennial ages and the final judgment and through the ages of eternity, we know not; but we say with the godly Toplady, "The more the better." Yes, the ages shall show us more and more of the love of God as they roll on; and the one living Head of the Church and of the universe shall for ever and ever draw us onward and upward into nearer and closer fellowship



with God, into the deeper and more comprehensive knowledge of his wisdom, into ever-brighter visions of his beatific glory.

We proceed now to sum up the *facts* connected with this dispensation of the fullness of the times, that we may have them before us at one view.

(1) This purpose of pure and eternal love springs from the spontaneous mercy of God, who before the foundation of the world determined to redeem, re-establish and glorify his creature man (Eph. i. 4; Rom. viii. 28; 2 Thess. ii. 13; 2 Tim. i. 9; 1 Pet. i. 2; ii. 9, etc.).

(2) This purpose of electing love was by the Father purposed in the Christ (Eph. i. 4; 1 Pet. i. 2), and in him the means are to be found for executing and perfecting it; so that *grace to the sinner* is evermore connected with the person of the Redeemer, whether in the purpose, the means or the final fruition. *God in Christ* is the sinner's God, and the only refuge for him is the throne of grace.

(3) There appear to be various forms or degrees of the Headship of Christ. He is Head of the Church (Eph. v. 23; iv. 15; Col. i. 18); he is Head of the human race, the second Adam, in whom all shall be made alive (1 Cor. xi. 3; xv. 22); he is the Head of all authority and power, the Prince of the kings of the earth, to whom they are bound to do homage (Rev. i. 5); he is Head over the angels and principalities of heaven (1 Pet. iii. 22). In a more general sense still he is Head over all things, visible and invisible, the heavenly and the earthly, the whole created universe (Eph. i. 10, 20, 21, 22; 1 Cor. xv. 27).

(4) From this passage Calvin drew the conclusion that the death of Christ confirmed the unfallen angels

in their estate of holiness. Before the redemption-work of the Saviour was completed the angels were not out of the region of danger (*extra-periculum*), but the Headship of the risen Saviour has perfectly established their union with God and made their glorious state infallibly secure: "*Primum ut perfecte et solide adhereant Deo, deinde ut perpetuum statum retineant.*" Grotius says there were formerly factions among the angels which the work of Christ removed: "*Antea inter angelos factiones erant—ea sustulit Christus.*" These are speculations which are foreign to the passage and cannot be proved from the word of God. Others, looking at this text in another light, seem anxious to draw from it the conclusion that all mankind, and even the fallen angels, shall finally be saved. This opinion is, indeed, extensively entertained in Germany, but it is entirely contrary to the letter and spirit of the New Testament. Augustine speculated from one passage that the elect from among men were to make up the number and occupy the place of the fallen angels. Bengel and others make the *gathering together of all things* to consist in the restoring, through the Headship of Christ, the harmony between angels and men which sin had broken. This is indeed a truth of much importance, and contained in the passage, but it does not exhaust it. All these difficulties are removed by taking the *all things* in their native sense as denoting the universe, and not intelligent beings merely. In this view the passage is in substance the same as Matt. xviii. 18. The universal Headship is for the purpose of revealing by and to the creation the unlimited authority with which He is invested.

(5) Let us, before leaving this magnificent passage,

refresh our hearts and brighten our hopes by contemplating the Headship of Christ in its relations to ourselves. He, then, is passed into the heavens as our Forerunner and Head who erewhile atoned for our guilt on the accursed tree. He is gone to the right hand of God in our immortalized and glorified humanity, far above principality and power and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. What virtues and capacities must be in the nature of man, when it is capable of such enlargement and glorification! What sin must be, which has brought us into Satan's rule and the corruption of the grave! And oh, what must the grace of God be, which has stooped so low that it might reach us and then lift us to such heights of glory? Our nature is enthroned on the dominion of the universe; our human nature, in the person of the God-Man, is shown to be the royal form of created being—the regnant and dominant race whom it delighted the heavenly King to honor. Verily, here is a hope set before us, my brother, which may well make the eye brighten and the heart leap. Oh, here is the dignity of human nature in its true and eternal importance—a dignity which philosophers little dreamed of; so high, so ennobling, so inconceivable, so like the glorious God who devised it, so worthy of the redeeming love which procured it, so demonstrative of the failure of all Satan's rage and malevolence against us, of the reversal of the curse, of the abolition of death, of the triumph of righteousness, of the irreversible purpose and progress of Jehovah's love to mankind. I am far, therefore, from subscribing to the opinion of Chrysostom, who says, "God has appointed one Head. He has

given one sovereignty in Jesus Christ over angels and men. As man, he is Head of the human race; as God the Word, he is Head of the angels." For, first, there is more in the *ta panta* (*all things*) of our text than the two races of men and angels; and, secondly, it is utterly unscriptural to separate the natures of Christ and say the divine rules over the angels and the human over mankind. No; the one person of the Christ, the one God-Man Mediator, rules over both, over all, and is the one undivided, all-sustaining, all-uniting, all-comprehending Head of the whole universe. We recognize our own nature in this living Head, and feel that we have a Friend above who knows our frame and remembers that we are dust. Here is the dignity and the destiny of man. Look to the stable and the cross and the grave, and believe in the humiliation of the *Son of God*. Look to the right hand of the Majesty on high, and behold the exaltation of the *Son of man*. Ye weeping saints, ye dying martyrs, look up steadfastly into heaven like Stephen, and in the glory of the heavenly throne behold the form of the Son of man. Here, here, is the bright high home of the redeemed Church. Here, here, in the circle of the throne (Rev. v. 11), in the presence of Him who loved us, with him for ever, and like him in every faculty of the mind and in every fibre of the body, we shall know more than did Baxter of the saint's everlasting rest.

The apostle adds, for the sake of emphasis, and to serve as a connection with the next verse, *even in him*. All things in him—even in him. His person is the centre of the apostle's thoughts and hopes, and it should be the centre of ours too. Of him all nature and grace should testify, and does to the ear of reason

and the heart of love. We feel him in the life of our renewed nature; we see him in the sun, moon and stars, and in the light of the circumambient air. The lamb and the lion testify of him; the vine with its pendent clusters, the rose of Sharon and the lily-of-the-valley are monitors to point our thoughts to him. Our life is hid with him in God, and when He who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory (Col. iii. 1-5). We labor in him, and our weakness becomes strong through the union; we die in him when our work is done, and in him we find our everlasting crown. It is a holy habit of mind to contemplate all things in him; to read every lesson which nature teaches in the light of his love; to find him ever present, ever near, in all that can befall us in both eternity and time.

We come now to the eleventh and twelfth verses, which reveal to us—

### III. THE INHERITANCE.

*In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ (ver. 11, 12).*

*In whom also we have obtained an inheritance.* The Greek verb here contains a reference to the possessions of the children of Israel, which were divided to them by *lot*; and hence many of the ancients, and De Wette among the moderns, render it thus: "In whom we were chosen, being predestinated according to his purpose." But this gives only a frigid meaning, and, besides, another and more proper word is used for the

election in verse 4. It may, indeed, very well include the idea of both the mode of the election and the possession; and, consequently, Bloomfield renders it thus: "Through whom also we have allotted to us this possession." The principal idea, however, is the *inheritance*, and not the *mode* of obtaining it; and hence Luther, Meyer and Harless have rendered it exactly as our translators have done: "In whom we have obtained an inheritance." The text, therefore, is substantially the same as Col. i. 12; Acts xx. 32; xxvi. 18; Rom. viii. 17, and carries the mind away to the blessedness reserved for the righteous.

The Israelites in their bondage looked for an earthly Canaan, and we too are marching from Egypt to Canaan—to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away. Hope is an essential part of our being, and the form which the future blessings of the new covenant take is that of an *inheritance*. In Egypt the Israelites hoped for deliverance, and God delivered them; in the wilderness they looked for a settled resting-place, and God brought them finally over the Jordan into the Promised Land. But did they then cease to hope? No; there were in them from the beginning the seeds of a better and more enduring inheritance, and the nation was filled and its whole worship and ritual interpenetrated with the hopes of a coming Messiah, who was to make an end of sin and bring in everlasting righteousness. And now that Moses has laid off the veil, and the Christian Church is surrounded with the splendors of a brighter light and a better covenant, is there nothing left to hope for? Yes, very much. The whole creation is groaning and travailing in pain together until now; and we who have

received the first-fruits of the Spirit are waiting for the adoption, which is the redemption of the body, which is the resurrection from the dead, which is the coming of Christ, which is the blessed hope which purifies us even as he is pure (Rom. viii. 19-24; 1 John iii. 2, 3).

Nor can we argue against the *futurity* of the inheritance from the aorist form of the verb—*we have obtained* an inheritance—for such is the language of Scripture generally, and such must ever be the language of faith, which overlooks all distinctions of time and space and seeks to appropriate as much as possible the realities of the future. Thus the believer is crucified with Christ, buried with him by baptism into death, raised with him to a new life and seated with him in heavenly places. We have all when we have Christ. We have the crown, for it is laid up for us in heaven (2 Tim. iv. 8); it is really ours, and we shall get possession of it when the King comes (1 Pet. v. 4). The inheritance is ours, but it is reserved in the skies for us until the appearing of Jesus Christ (1 Pet. i. 7). Besides, we may be said to have obtained, because Jesus, our Head and Fore-runner, has obtained it for us. He is the First-Born of the family, the First-Fruits of the harvest; and as surely as he has entered into his glory, so surely shall all his redeemed people follow him. We are joint-heirs with Christ; and he, having triumphed over our enemies and broken down the barriers of sin and death that obstructed us, has entered in our name into the common inheritance of all the saints. He has obtained it for them, and in the proper time he shall put them into the actual possession of it. We have also a first-fruits of this inheritance in the effusion of the Holy Spirit,

which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession (Eph. i. 14).

But the more important question for the believer is, "What is the inheritance which we expect? We know he has died, and sin is no more; we know he is risen, and death is no more; we know that he is ascended, and the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, abides with us for ever. What more has he procured for us?" *The inheritance!* But who shall describe the glories of the redeemed Church when they are all gathered home into the many-mansioned house of their Father in heaven?

*First.* We may learn something of this inheritance from its names in the Holy Scripture. They are promised a *kingdom* in which they shall be kings and priests unto God for ever and ever (Rev. i. 6). It is called *heaven*, the dwelling-place of God, where they shall have the fullness of joy at his right hand and rivers of pleasure for evermore. It is called the *city of God*, the *New Jerusalem*, where the saints are the citizens, Jesus being the King and love the law. The Scripture delineations of the New Jerusalem are extremely beautiful and altogether different from the paradise of the Moslems (Heb. xi. 10; xii. 22; Rev. iii. 12; xxi. 1-27). Augustine has incorporated all these into his fine Latin hymn on the glories of paradise, and old David Dixon has done the same in English in his immortal canticle beginning with the words

"O mother dear, Jerusalem."

It is called our *Father's house*—the place where the family meet and where the family treasures are kept. It is the upper *sanctuary* or *holiest* of *all*, where they



need no candle, neither light of the sun, but the Lord God and the Lamb are the light thereof. It is called the believer's *cup* or portion, the heavenly *reward* and the *crown* of glory that fadeth not away. It is called *joy*, the highest name for the blessedness of the righteous, and they are taken into it by the Lord himself (Matt. xxv. 21). It is the *rest* of the satisfied soul in God, of which Richard Baxter has written so well (2 Thess. i. 7; Heb. iv. 1-5). It is the true paradise of God, of which Eden was but a type. It is called *glory* (Heb. ii. 10), *eternal glory* (1 Pet. v. 10), inasmuch as the ineffable effulgence of Godhead fills the place. These are some of the names given to the inheritance of the saints, and surely they are well calculated to fill us with the purest and the most ennobling hopes.

*Second.* But what are the *enjoyments* of our heavenly home? These, we may well suppose, are *spiritual*. The carnal mind, which is enmity against God, has no place there, and the thousand cares and evil influences which distract or irritate the mind on earth are all removed from that better land. The rose blooms there without the thorns, and the holiness and the love which were here blighted by ungenial climes flourish there in the freshness and vigor of immortality. The *heart* of the redeemed will expand and expatiate in the ocean-fullness of divine love. He who redeemed them is in the midst of them, and will lead them to the fountains of living waters. New views of his redeeming love, new and fresh visions of his adorable person, fresh and ever-deeper disclosures of the mercy which pitied and the power which glorified them, shall break forth upon their enraptured minds; they shall praise, love and adore him for ever in his holy temple.

Their *intellectual* faculties will be enlarged and purified. Before them shall lie the whole circle of creation, the system of Providence and the character and attributes of God. His wisdom, love and power they shall be able to trace in the mysteries of nature and providence, which are now hid from human eyes. Newton has by this time left his *Principia* far behind him, and Milton could publish a new and improved edition of *Paradise Regained*. The enjoyments of the mind must make up a great part of the blessedness of heaven. The freed and expanded reason will no doubt delight in tracing the laws of the material universe and the supreme wisdom which ordained them, the rise and progress of the various kingdoms and empires, nations and races, which constitute the dominion of God; in tracing the wisdom, love and goodness of the Creator in every department of being, from the insect on earth to the seraph before the throne. Oh what a field for the intellect! what fruits of wisdom and knowledge to be gathered by the imaginative mind!

Nor are we to forget the enjoyments of the *body*, which will then be in perfect harmony with the volitions of the mind. Jesus has taken our body into heaven, immortal and glorified, and we are to be raised from the dead in the likeness of his glory. The soul is not the man, but a part of the man, and can never be perfect till united with the perfected body on the morning of the resurrection. They were made for each other, and their separation by death is the most frightful, unnatural and diabolical thing in the universe, save sin, which is its cause. Shall there be no music to charm the ear in the sanctuary above? or shall the redeemed delight in the beauty of nature

no more? No, verily; but the ear shall be made perfect, and there shall be perfect music to fill it, and the eye shall enlarge its vision, and the whole body, with all its senses and sympathies, shall be made worthy of its place and destiny—worthy of creative wisdom and redeeming love.

Then what enjoyments must flow from our *fellowship* with God and the Redeemer, through the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, with the angels of light and the Church of the first-born! Ah me! how the weary heart longs sometimes for all this! how earthly glory grows dim when we think of it! how the poor soul in such seasons gets eagle-glances of her destiny before the time and all but love and life fade from her enraptured vision!

*Third.* It is very important to observe the force of the two little words, *in whom*, which connect the inheritance with Christ. Take *in* to be synonymous with “through”—which it often is (Matt. xvii. 21; Gal. iii. 11; 2 Tim. ii. 10)—and the meaning is “through Jesus we obtain the inheritance;” or take it, as is still more natural, to denote “unity,” “locality,” “oneness,” and the sense is still more sublime. Our inheritance is in him; we seek no fountain but his love, no excellency save in his person, no hope save in his promises, no glory save that of being with him and like him for ever (1 John iii. 1-5). He is our inheritance. We can say with still greater fervor and fullness than the venerable Psalmist, “Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee” (Ps. lxxiii. 25). To the mind of the apostle everything good and noble and beautiful is so only by its union with Christ, its being from him or leading to him.

*Fourth.* This inheritance is obtained by those “*who are predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will*” (ver. 11). The apostle here returns to the eternal purpose of God, of which he had spoken in the fourth verse. He sees the original cause of human salvation in the free sovereign will of God, and he loses no opportunity of repeating and insisting upon this humbling doctrine of free grace. We had forfeited all; and if deliverance be possible, it must flow from the divine mercy.

*Fifth.* But this inheritance is to work a certain end and disposition in us, ‘*that we should be to the praise of his glory.*’ The glory of God is the final cause of the whole dispensation, and all things in nature and grace must contribute to that end.

The *we* in the twelfth verse is opposed to the *ye* in the thirteenth, and a contrast is clearly intended; but who the parties are is not so easily made out. Some take the *we* to be the Jews and the *ye* the Gentiles, thus: “We, the Jewish nation, hoped in Christ from the beginning; we were the first in whom the promise of deliverance took root, and God has given us the inheritance, that we should be to the praise of his glory; and now ye, Gentiles, have also been brought to believe in him by the preaching of the gospel.” This exposition is improbable. Others expound it thus: “We, the *first Jewish Christians*, are to the praise of his glory; we were the first to acknowledge him as the Messiah, the Son of God. The apostles were all Jews; the early Christian Church was mainly made up of Jewish converts. We trusted in Christ before you Gentiles, and now ye also are brought to the faith

by the word of the gospel." Here the two parties are the Jewish and the Gentile converts, and this, I believe, is the meaning of the passage. De Wette, on the other hand, denies that there is any reference to Jewish or Gentile Christians in the passage, and so do many others. According to Harless and Olshausen, the phrase "*to the praise of his glory,*" instead of being the end to which all points, is a mere parenthetical explanatory clause, and the sentence is made to give this sense: "We were predestinated to be those who (to the praise of his glory) first trusted in Christ," making the purpose of verse 12 terminate in the calling and endowment of the Jewish Church. But, in the first place, this gives a weak and insufficient final cause for the eternal purpose of God; and, secondly, "*to the praise of his glory,*" in verse 14 and verse 6, has nothing of the nature of an explanatory clause, and it is arbitrary to make it such here. Besides, it seems quite foreign to the purpose of the apostle in this chapter to refer, and in such terms, to the peculiar privileges of the Jewish nation. I believe the sentence ends with verse 12, and in verse 13 a new sentence and a new subject begin, comprehending the thirteenth and fourteenth verses.

The connection of the passage is difficult, and the train of thought so broken that, without violence to the words, it is not easy to make out a clear, consistent meaning. Grotius indeed asserts that the apostle is so full of his great theme that he pays no attention to grammatical construction: "*Apostoli minutas illas constructionis regulas non curabant (itaque genera casus, pronomena sæpe commutabant!) verborum incuriosi, quum tantæ res mentem ambirent.*" If this were so

to any considerable extent, the word of God would certainly be unintelligible, and the idea of inspiration would be preposterous.

The train of thought in the mind of the apostle was probably something like the following: "Jesus is the universal Head (ver. 10), and the whole creation is re-established and recapitulated in him. In him also we (the early apostolic Church) have obtained our inheritance (ver. 11). In this universal Headship he has not forgotten his believing people, but has ordained them to be to the praise of his glory; and, following the law of his universal kingdom, he has honored most those who loved and labored most, even those Jewish Christians who before all others believed in him and followed him." Now, this is a great fact, and the history of the Church confirms it. Salvation is of the Jews; the twelve apostles were all Jews; all the books of the New Testament were written by Jews; all inspiration is from them; and the churches of the risen Saviour were all founded by the twelve apostles of the Lamb. Surely these facts make the twelfth verse clear and intelligible. Jesus was the Foundation-stone of the temple, and he was a *Jew*, and it pleased him to have the course next him *Jews* also. This is a great honor, and it is given them because they first trusted in Christ; and many, with Sir Isaac Newton and Joseph Mede, believe that the *last* course before the top-stone will be *Jews* also; so that, as those who first believed after his coming in flesh were Jews, those who shall last believe before his coming in glory will be Jews also. Be this as it may, the twelfth verse seems to teach that the Jewish believers have a peculiar honor, and this honor is because they *first* believed in

Christ. This is very natural. The Moslems honor "the companions of the prophet" above all others, and Ali, the first believer, became the hero and demigod of the nation. We, with better reason, refer to the early apostolic Church as the mother and mistress of all churches; and on the whole earth there has never been any society so noble, so vigorous, so full of life and fearless in the hour of danger, so firm and triumphant in persecution and death, as that heroic band. They were to the praise of his glory. They followed Christ *first* and *closest* and *farthest*. This was their highest honor. So is it always: faith brings honor, and strong faith, in evil times, brings special honor. God does not respect the pomps and splendors of the world. He infinitely magnifies the moral over the natural by the calling and endowments of the apostolic Church. He shows thereby clearly to all men that faith, holiness, purity, are the characteristics of the Church and people which he delighteth to honor. Be it ours to follow this heroic band! Be their faith, their fortitude, their victory, ours! Their life was battle, their death was victory, their reward was glory. Trust! trust! trust the Lord for his promised aid, and keep the apostolic Church still before you! Jesus is the same yesterday and to-day and for ever. All things are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

But we come now to the thirteenth and fourteenth verses, which tell us of—

#### IV. THE SEALING OF THE SPIRIT.

*In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also*

after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory (ver. 13, 14).

*In whom ye also.* The word *trusted* is supplied by Beza, our translators and others, and this makes good sense and gives the spirit of the passage. Meyer supplies the substantive verb, and reads, "In whom ye are," building upon all the passages in which the believers are said to be *in Christ*. He stands alone in this, so far as I know. Very many translators supply the words from the eleventh verse, and read thus: "In whom ye also have obtained an inheritance." I believe all such additions are unnecessary, and that the second *in whom* (which can never, after the manner of the Hebrew, mean "inasmuch as," as Morus thought) is a repetition of the first, to make the meaning clearer, after the first member of the sentence had been given. The whole sentence runs thus: "In whom ye also, after that you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation (I say), in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise." The second *in whom*, like the first, refers to Christ, in whom the Jewish Christians first trusted (v. 12). But, leaving these small points of criticism (their name is Legion), let us attend to the substance of the apostolic utterance.

*First.* The names which the apostle gives the gospel are important. It is the gospel of *your salvation*, because it is the only means revealed to man of escaping the wrath to come; it is also called *the word of truth*, because all its statements, promises and prophecies are true and faithful, like God, its Author. A great man



has uttered a great truth in saying, "It has God for its Author, salvation for its end, and truth, without mixture of error, for its contents." It is the *power of God* unto salvation to every one that believeth (Rom. i. 16), and none that rested upon its promises were ever put to shame. Salvation and truth are necessarily connected together in the mind of the apostle, and we should never seek to dissever them. Error can never sanctify us or fit us for meeting God. The prayer of our heavenly Master is, "Sanctify them by thy truth, thy word is truth." His own name, like that of his gospel is "*the Truth*," and the enemy whose works he came to destroy is "the liar from the beginning who abode not in the truth." Stand fast, then, for the truth, as your fathers did; and for which, too, some of them died at the stake. They held by the gospel and rejected the superstitious additions and commandments of men. Do you the same. There is an infidelity which rejects all, and there is a superstition that swallows down all: reject them both and hold by the Bible, as your fathers did.

*Second.* The first duty on hearing the gospel is *faith*, and until this is established no future blessing can be expected. This is necessary, not because the *giving* of the gifts is connected with faith, but because the *receiving* of them is. The fountain may be opened for us in the wilderness, but we may neither feel our need of it nor believe that it is there; we may refuse to look though the serpent be lifted up. Faith is the organ which connects us with God and Christ and the realities of eternity. Till faith comes the gospel is a dead letter, a theory merely. Its heat does not warm us, its light does not shine into our hearts, its voice of

mercy falls on a cold ear. The Ephesians believed the gospel when they heard it—viz., a few scattered, despised people in the great city of Ephesus did so; for the multitudes of that luxurious capital were too much bent on the pleasures of the world to think of Calvary or the forgiveness of sins or the resurrection of the dead and judgment to come. The carnal mind was, and is, enmity against God; and if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. These are terrible sayings, though men heed them but little. When faith comes, it alters all things. It places us in a new and entirely different position. A new scene of surpassing beauty begins to dawn when the spirit is in the semi-slumber of awakening consciousness; it discerns—indistinctly, it may be, like Paul when smitten to the earth near Damascus—in the luminous future the form of the Son of man, still as tender and as loving as when he died; new and fresh hopes bud and fructify in the soul as we apprehend more and more clearly the nature of the gospel, and faith, strengthened and enlarged by exercise, becomes the dominant principle of our lives. We live by faith. The life that comes from the smitten rock flows into us and returns again to its source in the forms of thanksgiving and praise. Jesus is now the *home* of our hearts; all our affections naturally centre in him. The seeds of life are sown in our hearts, and the office of the Comforter is to water and fructify them. Heaven is begun and the first principles of the kingdom of God are established within us. Now we have an anchor to hold us in the storms; we have a great, noble end in view, and all things are subsidiary to it. Joy and sorrow, wealth and poverty, the changes of fortune, life and death,

are mere accidents which our Master, for our good, dispenses as he pleases; but the living principle which animates our entire life is that, whether absent or present, we may be accepted of Him (2 Cor. v. 9).

*Third.* Let us now contemplate *the sealing*, which comes before us in these words: "*After that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.*" The progress of the divine purpose in the soul is the following: The election, the hearing of the word, faith, baptism, and, finally, the sealing of the Spirit (Acts ii. 37-39; viii. 12, 15, 17; xix. 5-7). (Comp. Tit. iii. 5; Gal. iii. 2.) The only example of the sealing of the Spirit before baptism is Acts x. 44,\* and is given, probably, to show that God is not bound to ordinances, but works when and where and in whom he pleases. The Holy Spirit works indeed in giving faith (Acts xvi. 14); yet this gracious operation is only preliminary and subsidiary to the *sealing*. This, in the apostolic times, was often accompanied with signs and wonders and the gift of tongues, as we see in the Acts of the Apostles (ii. 4; viii. 15; xix. 5, 6). I do not say that these signs are necessary at all times to the sealing of the Spirit, for they ceased since the apostolic age, and even then the inward fruits of righteousness, the love of God and the Saviour, which the Spirit works in the heart—the righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost—were the real sealing, and much more important essentially than the power to cast out devils, raise the dead or speak with tongues. We may say, in general, *love* is nobler than *power*—the permanent fruit of the Spirit in the Church—a nobler seal than the

\* When Peter preached Christ to Cornelius and his friends.

manifestations of Sinai or the miracles of the primitive Church.

But what is this seal? A seal is a signet or a signet-ring used by kings and others for various important ends, some of which we shall now mention. (1) A seal was attached to *letters* to give them the royal authority; and so the Church is the epistle of Christ, known and read of all men (2 Cor. iii. 3). The gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit are the seal of God upon this epistle of his mercy, where the nations of the world and the angels of heaven may read his manifold wisdom (Eph. iii. 10). (2) A seal is used to secure the *possession* of property (Rom. xv. 28) and to show that it belongs to a particular master, and no other. It has his seal. Jesus Christ has purchased his people with his own precious blood, and the *sealing* of the Spirit is the mark that they belong to him. They are safe, for they are sealed with his seal, and they shall never perish, nor shall any pluck them out of his hand. (3) As the seal is the conclusion of the letter or the agreement, so it signifies often the *last*, the *end*, the *perfection*; thus the Moslems call Mohammed the seal of the prophets—viz., the last and most glorious of them. In this respect, also, the sealing of the Spirit is full of meaning. He is the last of the heavenly witnesses, and to blaspheme him is certain destruction. The Father has manifested his love to us in the gift of his Son; on the cross, in the great atonement, the Son has manifested his love and grace to the children of men. If we reject this double testimony of grace, there is still another voice to call us to God, even the Holy Spirit, who in the divine economy comes after the Son as the last and ever-abiding Comforter of the Church. He is the last

great gift of God, the seal of the living God upon the vessels fitted for the Master's use. What the Father originates and the Son carries on the Holy Spirit perfects. The Father elects, the Son redeems, the Holy Spirit sanctifies, seals and glorifies the Church. (See Ezek. xxviii. 12; Dan. ix. 2, in Heb.) These may be taken as illustrating the work of the Spirit in sealing us unto the day of redemption.

The text plainly teaches that the sealing is something different from the Spirit's work in producing faith; for it is said, "*After that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.*" We see the sealing of the Spirit, therefore, in the growth of the divine life in the soul, in the ripening of the fruits of righteousness, in the full assurance of faith and the growing conformity to the image of God. There are various steps or degrees in the inner kingdom of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. We hear the word, which is the first step; we believe it, which is the second; by baptism we are incorporated with the body of Christ, and that is another; the sealing of the Spirit now ripens us for the heavenly garner; then death brings us another step nearer the destiny that awaits us; then comes the advent, which is the resurrection from the dead and gives us the final blessedness in all its fullness and glory.

*Fourth.* He is called in our text "*that holy Spirit of promise.*" The Land of Promise means the Promised Land; the receiving of the promise of the Spirit (Acts ii. 33) means receiving the effusion of the promised Spirit, and so we are to interpret here; the promise is taken for the thing promised. (Comp. Gal. iii. 14.) We are, therefore, thrown back upon the Old Testament, where

the Holy Spirit is promised to mankind (Joel ii. 28–32; Isa. xliii. 3; Ezek. xxxix. 29; Zech. xii. 10). He is indeed called, in Acts i. 4, the promise of the Father, because it was the purpose of the Father to give him to the faithful. Thus the Jewish nation were the depository of two great promises which in the fullness of time were made over to the Gentiles—the promise of redemption through the Son, and the promise of sanctification through the Spirit, of God.

But, it may be asked, to whom is this promise given? It is to thee, brother, and to me; to all that are weary and heavy-laden—yea, to all that are ignorant and rebellious (Ps. lxxviii. 18; Acts ii. 4, 33). Read also Luke xi. 5–13, and see how good and how tender, how loving and how earnest, is thy heavenly Father. How full and free his grace! Ask! seek! knock! and your Father shall give you his Holy Spirit. His love is free, and the water of life is without money and without price. The two great promises of the Old Testament are fulfilled: the Lamb is slain, and the Comforter is come. The veil is rent in the cross, and the Church is sanctified and sealed by the Comforter.

*Fifth.* For the earnest of the inheritance (ver. 14) see 2 Cor. i. 22; v. 5, where, as in our text, it is connected with the Holy Spirit. The word here used for earnest is the Hebrew *arabon*, which means a pledge (Gen. xxxviii. 17–20) given to make sure all that is promised. This, then, is the mind of God in the sealing of the Spirit and in the Pentecostal effusion—viz., to give the redeemed Church a foretaste and pledge of the future inheritance. The *which* here should be rendered “who,” as it necessarily refers to the Holy Spirit. Nor is the Greek masculine to be accounted for simply

by the rule called *attraction*, but the apostle prefers the sense to the mere form. The Holy Spirit is masculine, though the *word* in Greek is neuter; and the apostle makes the pronoun agree with the person rather than with the form. Luther does the same very often in his translation. *Weib*, "wife," "woman," is a word of the neuter gender; yet Luther follows the *sense*, and connects it with feminine relations and pronouns. But this passage teaches clearly that the inheritance shall consist mainly in Christian joy, in likeness to the Saviour and in communion with the Holy Ghost. The earnest must be of the same kind as the inheritance which it secures for us; the first-fruits must be of the same nature as the harvest; and the whole family must resemble the First-Born. The Comforter is the pledge and the foretaste of future glory; and therefore this whole dispensation, called the dispensation of the Spirit, is but preparatory to that which is perfect and perpetual. A universal Pentecost would not be the promised inheritance, but only a foretaste and first-fruit of it.

*Sixth.* Hence the *earnest* is "*until the redemption of the purchased possession.*" This possession is no other than the Church which he has purchased with his blood, and which is yet to be redeemed from the power of the enemy and the corruption of the grave. There is a redemption by *price* by the dying Lamb of God, which is past, and we are indeed redeemed; there is a redemption by *power* by the King and the Judge, which is future, and we wait for the adoption, which is the resurrection of the body. This is the coming of Christ in glory and majesty for which we long and pray constantly, for which, too, the saints in

heaven wait patiently, and for which the whole fallen creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain until now (Rom. viii.). This is the redemption mentioned in our text, when the purchased possession shall be redeemed from the power of the devil, from the contagion of sin and the dominion of the grave. *Until* shows how long the earnest is to continue, and *unto* shows that the redemption of the purchased possession itself is for the *praise of the glory of God*. What we look for is the final redemption, and this redemption is to be for the praise of the glory of God. His glory is the end of creation, providence and redemption. For this all things were created, are redeemed and are to be headed up in Christ.\*

*Seventh.* Better will it be, in conclusion, to survey once more the glorious theme on which the apostle dwells with such delight. There is more valuable matter, more substantial truth, contained in our passage (ver. 7-14) than in all the literature of the Greeks and Romans from the earliest times—than in all the secular historians of the world. The subject is high and the range of thought exceedingly extensive, for he discourses of reconciliation with God, the atonement of Christ and the gathering together all things in heaven and on the earth under one glorious Head. The believer, too, is remembered in this all-comprehending theme as the *sealed* of the Holy Spirit, for whom the everlasting inheritance is prepared. The Spirit is himself the pledge of that inheritance; and we may well

\* This subject ends with the fourteenth verse; and if any one wishes to see the endless diversities of opinion that prevail concerning "the purchased possession," he may consult the German commentators, where he may get full satisfaction.



ery with Saint Jerome, "*Si arrhabo tantus, quanta erit possessio?*" ("If the earnest be such, what shall the possession be?") Does it not, then, give us some insight into the depth of God's love to us when we see him electing, redeeming and glorifying us in such a divine and wonderful manner? Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church and the creation, and through him every needy creature may come to the fountains of God—the fountains of mercy, which sin had sealed, but which, in Jesus, are now opened to the thirsty world. Brother-man, this is a great truth. Here is life and peace and joy for you and for me. Here is a foundation on which you need not fear to rest for the future, a lifeboat that can bear you over the sea of death into the city of your God. There is redemption in his blood, even the forgiveness of sins; and it is held out freely to thee, my brother, and to me. His Spirit says, "Come," and whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely.

"O God, whose wondrous name is Love,  
 Whose hands have fashioned us anew,  
 Before thy face now stands the Lamb  
 Whom sinful man once pierced and slew.  
 Thine own dear Son thou didst not spare:  
 How shalt thou cease for us to care?

"Thou art the potter, we the clay;  
 Thy will be ours, thy truth our light,  
 Thy love the fountain of our joy,  
 Thine arm a safeguard day and night,  
 Till thou shalt wipe our tears away  
 And Jesus bring eternal day!"

## CHAPTER III.

Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.—EPHESIANS i. 15-23.

THE apostle, in the first part of our chapter, gives us the salutation and introduction, and now, in the fifteenth and following verses, we have his prayer.

This was his customary method (Phil. i. 3; Rom. i. 8; 1 Cor. i. 4; Col. i. 3; 1 Thess. i. 2; 2 Thess. i. 3), and the practice is well worthy of imitation. Prayer sweetens the relations of human life, and is in itself infinitely desirable altogether apart from the blessings which it draws down from heaven. It opens the heart when it is shut up and hardened, while it disposes us to mildness, forgiveness and brotherly love. We need guidance in everything, and hence we should begin everything with prayer. Wherever the spirit of

prayer abounds we may expect peace and all the fruits of the Holy Spirit. The whole Bible is pervaded with the deepest, lowliest spirit of prayer, and in this it is distinguished from other books. We breathe there a heavenly atmosphere, and feel ourselves at every turn brought into contact with God.

Read the following examples, that your mind and heart may be tranquillized with the spirit of prayer: The prayers of Jesus, John xi. 41; xvii. 1, etc.; of Zacharias, Luke i. 13; of Amos, Amos vii. 2-5; of Esther, Esth. iv. 16; of Nehemiah, Neh. ix. 5; of Ezra, Ezra ix. 6; of Asa, 2 Chron. xiv. 11; of Jonah, Jonah ii. 1, etc.; of Daniel, Dan. ix. 3; of Manasseh, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 12; of Hezekiah, 2 Kings xix. 15; of Solomon, 1 Kings viii. 22; of David, 2 Sam. vii. 18, and the Psalms generally; of Hannah, 1 Sam. i. 10; of Samson, Judg. xvi. 28; of Moses, Ex. xxxii. 12; of Jacob, Gen. xxxii. 9.

These examples may help us also as to the expressions which we ought to use in prayer, as they are the best directory for the form and manner of approaching God.

The whole of this fine passage, from verse 15 to the end of the chapter, is the apostle's prayer for the Ephesian church. Let us attend to its various parts.

### I. THE TWO HEAVENLY GIFTS.

*Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints* (ver. 15).

It has been argued by some that the expression "*After I heard,*" or "*Having heard,*" proves that the apostle was unacquainted with those to whom he wrote, and consequently that he could not have addressed his

Epistle to the Ephesians, who were personally known to him. But (1) there is nothing to prevent us from hearing of the faith and love of those we *know*, and the fact that we know them only increases our interest in their improved condition. The church at Ephesus, since he left them, may have got large additions to their numbers, may have received more abundantly the gifts of the Holy Spirit, may have been growing in favor with God and man; and the apostle's hearing thereof is sufficient cause for thankfulness. But (2) we might with better reason take a peculiar meaning out of the verb *to hear*, and say in this passage it means to "know by experience," and that therefore the text expressly asserts that Paul was well acquainted with those to whom he wrote. That the Greek verb *to hear* has this signification is manifest to every diligent reader of the Bible. Our translators rightly render it in this sense (1 Cor. xiv. 2): "*No man understandeth him.*" So it must be understood in Gen. xi. 7 (in the Septuagint) and many others, such as Gen. xlii. 23; Matt. ii. 3, 22; v. 21; xi. 2; Matt. v. 27; Deut. xxviii. 49; 2 Kings xviii. 26; Jer. v. 15; Ezek. iii. 6. The Hebrew verb has the same application, Gen. xi. 7; xli. 15; xlii. 2. There is nothing, therefore, in the verse in any way inconsistent with the opinion that Paul directed his Epistle to the Ephesians. But, leaving these opinions, let us turn to the contents of our passage.

*First. Faith* is the first gift of God which he mentions in their praise, and truly in many respects it deserves the first place in our letters, in our hearts and in our lives.

(1) What is *faith*? It is a holy resting upon the

word and promise of God as true and faithful, so that the natural consequence is peace of conscience and spiritual joy ; it is a taking of God at his word, without any *ifs* or *buts*, without qualifications or conditions, without asking why or wherefore, or any other save the single question, “*What, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?*” We convince ourselves by reason and testimony that God is the speaker, and from that moment *faith* takes all that is given, hears all that is uttered, believes every word spoken, without a moment’s hesitation. It is not so much the hand that receives as the *receiving* itself; not the feet, but the *coming* to Christ; not the eye that looks, but the *looking* to Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith.

(2) Their faith was *in the Lord Jesus Christ*. De Wette, indeed, asserts (on Rom. iii. 25): “*Man kann nicht πιστις εν sagen—und ganz unerhört ist πιστευειν εν τῷ αίματι,*” etc.; that is, De Wette asserts that we cannot, according to the principles of the Greek language, say we *believe in Christ*, we have *faith in Christ*; and to speak of believing in the blood of Christ is an unheard-of absurdity. This is surely a great mistake of the distinguished critic, if, indeed, it be not something worse. The verb *to believe* is followed by a *dative*, Mark xvi. 13; John v. 46; Acts viii. 12; to *believe upon* with a *dative*, Luke xxiv. 25, with an *accusative*, Rom. iv. 24; to *believe on*, followed by an *accusative*, John xiv. 1; 1 Pet. i. 21; to *believe in*, followed by a *dative*, which De Wette denies, Mark i. 15; Gal. iii. 26; 1 Tim. iii. 13; and the same form is found in both the Hebrew and the Arabic language (Jer. xii. 6; Ps. lxxviii. 22). In these languages, as in our own, they can use all these various forms: “I believe *in* Christ,”

“I believe *on* Christ,” “I believe *upon* Christ,” “I believe Christ,” and “I believe many things *about* Christ.” I assert the same of all languages on the face of the earth. But De Wette’s theology here, as in other passages, moulds his criticism (especially on Rom. ix. 5) and shakes our confidence in his impartiality. When, therefore, Paul in our text says he “heard of your faith *in* the Lord Jesus,” he is speaking perfectly good Greek and following a very extensive analogy or usage in the New Testament. Jesus is the great object of faith in the New Testament. His glorious person is the Rock on which our faith rests, the Sun of righteousness for our eyes, the Refuge-City into which we run, the Gift given us by almighty God, which we receive by the hand of faith. Our faith glories in all his names, titles, offices and attributes as the Head of the Church, the Redeemer of the world, the Mediator, Advocate and Judge (Acts xx. 21; xxvi. 18; Col. ii. 5; Gal. iii. 26); in *Christ* (Eph. i. 15; Col. i. 4; 1 Tim. i. 14; iii. 13; 2 Tim. i. 13; iii. 15; also, with a genitive, James ii. 1; Eph. iv. 13). This remarkable form, “The faith which belongs to you,” occurs in certain other passages, and has the same signification as “your faith.” [See the Greek form of expression in Acts xvii. 28; xviii. 15; xxvi. 3.] The best Greek writers sometimes use the same form (Thucyd. 6, 16). We should naturally have expected that the article would have been repeated after *faith*, as it is after *love* in the second clause of the verse; but the language admits such varieties.

*Second.* Now comes the next great gift for which the apostle praises them—*love*, brotherly love, love to all the saints. It has its fountain in the love of God

as the Father of the whole redeemed family. His love to us produces corresponding love to him, and in loving the common Father we necessarily love one another. The bonds, indeed, which bind the saints together are very many and very strong. They are members of the same family, redeemed with the same precious blood and filled with the same quickening Spirit. They have the same friends and the same enemies, the same hopes and the same fears, the same promises of good things to come and the same living Head in heaven. How full and deep and strong should be their love to one another! The words of our text are instructive: "Love to *all* the saints." Ye have no exceptions and no preferences, no suspicions and no base, calculating, sectarian spirit of complaint to embroil and embitter all. Be done with your narrow-mindedness, my brother, and with all your dwarfish, sectarian bigotry, and let your heart expand lovingly over the whole family of God. All saints, from Abel to the end—the redeemed Church of Christ, the monuments of divine mercy, the habitation of God through the Spirit, the heirs of the heavenly inheritance, the whole great congregation of the faithful in all ages and nations,—all saints: that is the circle of your love. Not these saints and those saints who are modeled nationally or ecclesiastically to your taste, but all who believe on the name of the Son of God, whatever their language or creed, whatever their country or color. These are our brethren, and we shall meet them in heaven. With these we cast in our lot for time and for eternity; and, whatever be their failings and imperfections, we will love them *all*. In the stirring words of Wesley's hymn:

“One family, we dwell in him,  
 One Church above, beneath,  
 Though now divided by the stream—  
 The narrow stream—of death.

“One army of the living God,  
 To his command we bow;  
 Part of the host have crossed the flood,  
 And part are crossing now.”

These two capital virtues, *faith* and *love*, are the first work of the Spirit in the hearts of believers. In other passages *hope* is added (Col. i. 4, 5; 1 Thess. i. 3). The first reaches over the boundaries of the visible and fixes its eye on the unseen home—God the Redeemer, the glorious kingdom, the communion of saints, the eternal reward; the second flows from the smitten heart like the streams from the rock in the wilderness, encircling all saints with its dewy influences; and hope opens the vista of the future and presents to the longing eye the kingdom and coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, the resurrection of the saints and the crowns of glory. Where these three gifts abound the Church is in a healthy, vigorous condition, and in proportion as they increase and multiply we come nearer to the glories of the apostolic ages.

## II. THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION.

*Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers* (ver. 16).

There is no place where our remembrance is so much worth as at the throne of grace, for there the selfishness, worldliness and sectarianism of our nature fall off from us and our affections become more pure and blessed; our prayers and intercessions for one another unite us more and more with all saints in the



unity of the Spirit; while, at the same time, they draw down from our Father in heaven the blessings of his grace. Paul could say, "I have heard of your faith and love, dear brethren, in the Lord Jesus, and therefore I *cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers.*" His first feeling is to *give thanks for them.* They had errors, no doubt, and were far from being perfect, as his prayer for them teaches, but he will first give thanks for what they have received. He recognizes the good work of the Spirit, and then hopes for an increase of it. This is the way to increase our own trust and confidence in the Lord, and at the same time to widen the channels of divine love. How sweet and tender is this spirit of love! We see the same in its greatest perfection in the person of the Redeemer. He begins with praise wherever the least praise is possible, that he may win himself a way into the hearts of men. In the epistles to the seven churches (Rev. ii. and iii.) he always begins with commendation—though in these churches there were errors of all kinds—and thus sweetly introduces himself to the evils he would remove by some tender word, such as, "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee."

Prayer, generally speaking, is the life of a Christian Church, and when it takes the forms of thanksgiving and intercession it is peculiarly blessed and attractive. The Head in heaven is the living, everlasting Intercessor for the whole Church; and the members of his body, filled with his Spirit, abound in intercessions and prayers for one another, and for the unbelieving world. This spirit of love proceeds from all and animates all. The father prays for the son, and the son for the fa-

ther; the mother for the daughter, and the daughter for the mother; the pastor is much in prayer and intercession for his beloved flock, and they never fail to remember him before the throne of grace. In the silence of the heart, in the secrecy of the closet, in social meetings for prayer, in the morning and evening sacrifice of the family and in the public ministrations of the sanctuary, there arises the constant incense of praise and thanksgiving and intercession for relatives and friends, for sick and afflicted ones, for rulers and governors, for the whole Christian Church and for the whole heathen world.

Let us imbibe this spirit of intercessory prayer and seek to grow up into closer and deeper fellowship with God. Prayer moves the hand that moves the world. Thy tender, trembling voice of fervent prayer rises above the loudest thunder, pierces the clouds and the heavens and reaches the ear of God. It draws down blessings on thyself and on thy brethren and tempers thy soul with the communion of saints. Rejoice evermore; pray without ceasing; let the same mind be in thee which was also in Jesus, the Redeemer and the Intercessor.

### III. THE SUBSTANCE OF THE PRAYER.

*That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward, who be-*

*lieve, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ (ver. 17-20).*

After having stated the causes for thanksgiving and special intercession in regard to the church at Ephesus, the apostle now, as his custom was, pours forth the fullness of his heart in sweetest prayer to God for them all. This beautiful supplication extends from the seventeenth verse to the nineteenth. Let us attend to the particulars contained in it.

*First. The names of God.* We have first here the name "*the God of our Lord Jesus Christ*"—a form which occurs nowhere else in the Scriptures; but "*the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*" does often occur; and, as we have discussed this name already (Eph. i. 3), we must refer you to what we have said above.

In what sense, then, is the Father of glory called the God of our Lord Jesus Christ? I have often enough shown that "*Lord Jesus Christ*" is the mediatorial name of the Redeemer, and surely, as the sent One, the promised Messiah, the Mediator, or, in one word, the God-Man, the Father may properly be called his God. Even in the passage (Heb. i.) where the writer formally demonstrates his Godhead, names him God and Creator of the universe, yet in the same breath he says, "*God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows;*" and Jesus himself says, "*I ascend to my God and your God*" (John xx. 17); and on the cross his bitter cry was, "*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*" (Matt. xxvii. 46). I see no difficulty in these passages, nor do I seek by any effort to explain them away. They teach that Jesus Christ was a creature, and I believe it; that God was

his God in the truest, fullest sense of the word, and I believe it. That the blessed Son of God came thus low to seek and to save the lost is not to be denied or explained away, but gloried in and defended unto the death. This text should never have been quoted on the Homo-ousian controversy, and I detest the orthodox efforts to get rid of its natural meaning, as I detest the Arian perversions of John i. 1; Rom. ix. 5 and other passages that refer to the divinity of Christ. It is a *fact* that the eternal Son emptied himself of his glory and took upon himself the form of a servant (Phil. ii.) that he might depend on the Father, which we had failed to do; that he might live to the Father, receive all from the Father, never seek his own glory, but the Father's, and finally die on the cross to vindicate the Father's violated law and thus open the fountains of mercy to mankind. Admit this, and there is no difficulty any more in the Scripture delineations of the person of Christ. He is the Son of God and the Son of man; the Creator of the universe and the babe of Bethlehem; the Man of faith, prayer and perfect love to God, and yet the Object of the adorations of angels and men. He is God over all (Rom. ix. 5), and yet the Father is his God; all extremes meet and are reconciled in his wonderful person. If this doctrine of the God-Man be rejected, the Scripture becomes inexplicable, and man has no Redeemer. "Father of glory" may either mean "the glorious Father," according to a well-known Hebraism, or it may, more naturally, signify the author and possessor of glory; and so we take it here—the fountain, source and possessor of glory. *Glory* among both Hebrews and Greeks signifies the grace, majesty and beauty of the royal state:

the radiance, splendor and inapproachable light of the heavenly throne (Ex. xxiv. 16; xl. 34; Isa. vi. 3; Ezek. i. 28). Jehovah is the centre and fountain of all the excellence, majesty and glory of the universe. Even so Jesus is called the *Lord of glory*. (See Ps. xxix. 3; Acts vii. 2; Ps. xxiv. 7; Heb. ix. 5.) *Glory* is thus the highest biblical expression for all excellence, and especially for the external splendor connected with the throne of God and the divine presence.

*Second. The spirit of wisdom.* Some think that because the apostle uses here *spirit* without the Greek article he cannot mean the Holy Spirit, the Sanctifier, but the disposition of the believer's mind. Such a principle, however, cannot be established from the doctrine of the Greek article, nor from the usage of the New Testament. (See Luke iv. 1; Acts x. 38; Luke iv. 18; Matt. xii. 28, where *pneuma* without the article denotes the Holy Spirit, the Comforter.) The article is not intended to denote *personality*, but to give *emphasis* to the word to which it is joined; and that it does not always do. The prayer of the apostle is that the Father of glory would shed down upon the Ephesians the gifts of the Holy Ghost, or rather the Holy Ghost himself, to fill them with all spiritual blessings (Rom. xii. 6; 1 Cor. xii. 4, 9, 28, 30, 31; 1 Pet. iv. 10, etc.). He is called the spirit of wisdom, grace, glory, etc., because he is the Author of these blessings. He it is that gives wisdom to the simple and an understanding heart to them that fear the Lord. His nature is divine; his name is emphatically "the Holy One;" his place is the bosom of the Church; and his office, in the absence of Christ, is to sanctify and comfort believers (John xvi. 14). He reveals to us the Saviour's

love and disposes our hearts to receive it. This verse, then, teaches us that we need two gifts—*wisdom* and *knowledge*; and these the Holy Spirit gives. It insists, too, upon the fact that it is not the knowledge of nature or the arts of life or the demonstrations of science, but the *knowledge of Jesus Christ*, which we need, and we are assured that the Holy Spirit will reveal to the saints, according to their need, more and more of the fullness of their divine Master.

*Third. The enlightening of the eyes of the understanding* is the next petition of the apostle. Instead of *understanding*, most of the best manuscripts and authorities read “the eyes of your *heart*.” This is evidently the correct reading, and it has been received into the text by the soundest critics of modern times. (Comp. Rom. i. 21; 2 Cor. iv. 6; Rom. ii. 15; 1 John iii. 20, 21.) Bengel, Meyer and others take “the enlightened eyes” to be the accusative absolute, and our translators seem to have done the same; but surely the natural and simple construction is to govern it by *give*—that he would give to your heart enlightened eyes. The meaning is little different from the common reading, inasmuch as *heart* denotes not only the will and the affections, but also the reflective and thinking faculty (Matt. xiii. 15; Mark vi. 52; John xii. 40; Rom. i. 21; 2 Pet. i. 19). In the Hebrew it has the same signification (Isa. vi. 10; Job xii. 3). This enlightening of the eyes of the heart is expository of the work of the spirit of wisdom mentioned in the former verse. The meaning is: If you have received the spirit of wisdom in revealing to you the knowledge of Christ, his presence will be felt in opening the eyes of your heart. He opens up the excellences of the Redeemer,

and he opens your heart to contemplate them with delight. He removes every impediment out of the way, that the Saviour and the sinner may meet—that our weakness and wickedness and wants, our obstinacy, blindness and vanity, may be met and removed by a gracious and all-sufficient Saviour. The Spirit gives us light from the beams of the Sun of righteousness and inflames our hearts with the fiery baptism of love to God and man. The work of the Holy Ghost is the very life and soul of the Christian Church. Where his person and offices are denied or not believed in, you have the silence and solitude of death, as among Rationalists, Socinians and Arians. Where his person is recognized, but his personal working denied or not understood or restricted to a certain class, as bishops, or tied down absolutely to certain acts, as baptism, confirmation, etc., there you have the reign of rites and forms, the oppression of a grinding ritualism, like that which oppresses the Oriental and the papal churches. Where, on the other hand, his work is altogether detached from the word of God and the ordinances, and his person and offices firmly believed in, then you have the spirit of sectarianism, Quakerism, Fifth-Monarchy Men and all sorts of pretenders to inspiration and new revelations.

On this deep subject we venture the following observations for the guidance and satisfaction of pious, inquiring minds:

(1) The ordinances appointed by Christ are the legitimate and ordinary channels of the waters of life. In them the Lord has promised his Spirit, and to neglect them, while yet we seek the presence of the Comforter, is presumption. The Bible is the revelation

of God, the Spirit is the enlightener of the heart, and the means of grace are intended of the Lord to realize in the Church the office of the one and the truth of the other.

(2) It is the right and privilege of all the members of Christ to ask their heavenly Father for the gifts of the Holy Spirit to guide, comfort and enlighten them. No word or ordinance of man should keep them from that sacred duty. He is the promise of the Father and the gift of the ascended Son and the Church's Comforter, to abide with them for ever. Nor can you remain long in doubt of his gracious operation if you are really in earnest with God about the state of your souls. You will find the word and the ordinances and the promises becoming daily more and more dear to you; the affections of the heart more and more drawn out toward the Redeemer, who deserves a thousand times more than we can give; the conscience more and more tender in respect to the guilt and the enormity of sin; the eye of the heart and the mind more and more directed to the cross; the hope of future glory will become brighter, and the whole life, as you near the better land, will become radiant with peace and love and joy.

(3) It seems to be the duty of pastors to bring the doctrines connected with the person and offices of the Holy Spirit often before the Church. This arises from the work he has promised to perform and the prominence which is given to his agency in the Bible. In the New Testament especially he is everywhere presented as the quickener, the enlightener, the comforter and the life of all that believe. He may be resisted, quenched, grieved, blasphemed; and hence the import-



ance of being rightly instructed regarding our duties and relations to him. The position which the Spirit occupies in the present dispensation shows that the Church stands related to him in a special and wonderful manner. The Father's place is the throne, the direct object and end of worship; the Son is at the right hand or before the throne, as the one High Priest and Mediator; and the place which the Spirit occupies is the *Church*, which is the temple of his presence and the holy place where he condescends to dwell. He awakens within us all holy desires, and these ascend, through the Mediator, to the Father. Thus everything connected with the actual endowment and sanctification of the Church belongs to the Holy Spirit. He directs our eyes to the Sun of righteousness; he opens in our hearts the streams of refreshing which make glad the city of God; he relaxes the grasp of the destroyer and dissolves the enchantment which sin and the world have thrown over us; he brings light into our darkness, and life and peace and joy into the cold region of sin and death. In our text he is the *Enlightener*.

*Fourth.* And this light is to lead us to *know what is the hope of his calling*. This is the genitive of the efficient cause, and signifies the hope which God's calling causes. (See Col. i. 23.) The word *what* does not express the object of the hope (*res sperata*), but the quality and nature of it—what *kind* of a hope it is, how great, how excellent, how glorious. Nothing but the teaching of the Spirit can give you an idea of the majesty and excellence of the things hoped for. "Calling" has much signification in the New Testament, and teaches us not a little of the grace and

goodness of God. We observe that his calling is God's act (Rom. xi. 29; Phil. iii. 14), by which he arrests the sinner in his path to ruin and awakens in him the new life and the new hopes of the gospel. It is the *high* calling of God (Phil. iii. 14), because of the heights of glory to which it leads; it is a *holy* calling (2 Tim. i. 9), because it brings us to the fountain of love in Jesus Christ and clothes us with the white robes which are the righteousness of saints; it is a *heavenly* calling (Heb. iii. 1), because the voice comes from heaven and leads us to heaven. We are to make our *calling* and election sure (2 Pet. i. 10) by a hearty and diligent use of the means of grace which our heavenly Father has put within our reach. This is what the old divines termed *effectual* calling, to distinguish it from the mere outward call of the gospel, which so many hear without profit. As it is written, many are called, but few are chosen (Matt. xx. 16). How great and glorious this hope must be we may gather from the dignity of Him who calls us—God; from the infinite mercy of Him through whom we are called—Jesus the Mediator; from the work, office and person of Him who opens our hearts to obey the call—the holy Spirit of God; from the distress and misery and ruin from which it turns us away; and from the inheritance of heavenly glory with God to which it finally leads us.

*Fifth.* And that ye may know what is the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints. This is much stronger than "what is the *glorious* riches of his inheritance," though the meaning is substantially the same. All attempts of certain cold critics to separate *his inheritance* from *the saints* are vain, as

if the idea of God's having his inheritance in the saints were a strange or unscriptural one (Deut. xxxii. 9; 1 Sam. x. 1; Ps. lxxviii. 71). On the contrary, we have seen (ver. 14) that the Church of Jesus is his purchased possession. He makes a full exchange with us, and, as we say, in the fullness of love, "The Lord is our portion and inheritance," so he says, "My inheritance is in the saints. They are my chosen, redeemed portion, on whom I have expended the riches of my grace, and on whom I mean to expend all the riches of my glory." This is the natural meaning of the passage, and it suits well the glowing descriptions of the Church's calling and destiny which we find in this Epistle.

His inheritance *in the saints* may be taken in the sense of "the inheritance which he has purposed for the saints"—viz., to be distributed *among* them in the day of his appearing. Here, then, once more the eye of hope is turned to the inheritance, and the loving heart is kept expanding under the impulse of such transcendent promises. Ponder well these words, "The riches of the glory of God's inheritance is in the saints," and say, "Can it really be possible? Can such words come from the Creator of the worlds? Can even divine love condescend so far?" Oh, my brother, *yes*, it is even so; and are not such delineations of the future in keeping with and worthy of the wonders of the past? Think of Nazareth and Bethlehem and Calvary and the incarnate God redeeming a world, and you will see how the everlasting delights of God may be settled and exhausted in the elected, redeemed, sanctified and glorified Church. These saints are the Lord's peculiar people, his jewels,

his treasure hid in the field, his purchased possession and his goodly heritage. His delights are in the saints; his love fills their hearts, and in his presence they shall have rivers of pleasure for evermore. He is theirs, and they are his. He has loved and chosen them, and they have loved and chosen him. Their misery and wretchedness he shared and appropriated in the days of his humiliation, and they shall be covered with the robe of his righteousness and crowned with the garlands of victory in the day of his royal glory.

*Sixth.* As the climax to this wonderful manifestation of Jehovah's kindness to the saints, the apostle mentions his working in the Christ to raise him from the dead and set him on the heavenly throne far above all dominion and power; and he asserts that the same power is working in them that believe, and shall finally make them like their Master and bring them to him.

There is a divine power in the Church. It may be more or less manifested in this place or in that, in this particular age or in that, but the *energy* of God which raised Jesus from the dead is in all believers, and shall remain with them and never leave them till they are enthroned with him in glory (Col. ii. 12). This is the guarantee for the Church's perpetuity till the promises of God come to nothing and the Rock of ages breaks in pieces (Matt. xvi. 18). This was the endowment of Pentecost, the last best gift of the risen Redeemer, to remain with the Church for ever; and this outfit for her journey has never been withdrawn, but remains in her still, and must remain in her while there is need for a Quickener

to quicken and a Comforter to comfort the children of men.

In the days of the apostles this indwelling energy broke forth in all kinds of wonderful acts of power and love, which gave the ministrations of the primitive Church such irresistible efficacy, which clothed the apostolic testimony with celestial authority and carried conviction with the force and rapidity of lightning into the minds of men. The life which the Saviour poured out on the cross was not resumed from the grave, but another kind of life (1 Cor. xv. 42-46), over which death hath no dominion (Rom. vi. 9), and of which the presence and the power of the Holy Spirit in the Church are the foretaste and the pledge (Eph. i. 14; iv. 30; 2 Cor. i. 22.). The miraculous manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the person of Christ during his earthly ministry were ante-resurrection foretastes of the plenitude of power which he entered into at the Ascension; and, in like manner, all the inworking of the Quickener in the Church, be it in the form of love or of faith or of miraculous power, is the bond which unites her to the glorified Head, the foretaste and pledge of her resurrection glory (Rom. viii. 11).

Every word in this nineteenth verse is emphatic and burns with apostolic fervor: "*And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power.*" Faith is the gift of God, and the believer is brought under the same mighty power which raised and glorified the Mediator. Why is it, then, that we are so weak and timorous in fighting the good fight of faith? Why does the world charm us and the flesh master us and the

tempter triumph over us so often? It is because of the weakness of faith. We do not draw from the supplies which grace has provided for us, nor rest for strength and victory on our heavenly Master's hand. Ages of indifference and infidelity have made us weak, and the pretensions of the papists to heavenly gifts and miraculous manifestations of the Holy Ghost, while their kingdom is the kingdom of the beast and their morality the lowest in Europe, have made many averse to the whole spiritual and supernatural element in the Christian system. Thus, Christianity has become a mode rather than a life; a civilization rather than a revelation; a development of the natural law of order and beauty rather than an indwelling of the Holy Ghost. The way to break this delusion is to look up to the throne of the Redeemer, from which he dispenses the gifts of his mercy and power. The one Spirit dwells in the Head and the members, and the power of the Conqueror at the right hand of God is yours to make you conquerors, and more than conquerors, through Him that loved you. The Church is his body, united to him by the two bands of a common nature and a common Spirit. His life is in her. It was the mighty power of God mentioned in our text which wrought in him by the Holy Spirit; which led, sustained and comforted him; which enabled him to bear the cross and despise the shame; which quickened his body in the grave, fitted him for the glory of the heavens, and finally elevated him into universal dominion. So is it with the Church: the same power, the same life of God, dwells in her, though not in the same measure; it guides her, fills her, crucifies her, comforts her, and finally glorifies her.

## IV. THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

*When he raised him from the dead (ver. 20).*

In considering the doctrine of the resurrection of Christ, we may direct our attention to the following *facts* :

*First.* The wages of sin is death. He must therefore die in our nature and by a solemn act of power and love cancel on the cross the guilt of his people. His death is the ransom, and his resurrection is the proof that it is paid. The fact of atonement is demonstrated by his resurrection.

*Second.* Resurrection is the foundation of the Christian system. The Church commences specially with the resurrection of Christ, and is built upon his living, life-giving person. We were crucified with him, and in his resurrection we are raised with him to a new and immortal life. The fallen life flowed from the first Adam, immortality comes from the second; up to resurrection he was the Jew, fulfilling the Jewish law, embodying the spirit of the Old Testament and manifesting what a Jew ought to be; from resurrection he is the centre of new life, immortal and glorious, the Head of the Church and the dispenser of the Holy Ghost. Resurrection is the hinge. Up to that he is the Receiver, and from that the Giver; up to that the Anointed, and from that the anointing One; up to that the atoning Lamb, and from that the interceding High Priest in heaven; up to that he is the Burden-Bearer, and from that the Sceptre-Bearer, of creation; up to that he is the weary Man of sorrows, the patient, hidden, sin-bearing Lamb, and from that the all-sustaining, all-filling, life-quickenning God. Hence resur-

rection is not to be considered as an abstract dogma, a proposition to be received or doubted or denied according to the amount of evidence. It is the grand centre of life, and sheds its influence in and over the whole character of the believer. We are united with the risen One, the Conqueror at the right hand of God, and hence our strength, our joyful confidence and our victory over all things. The impregnable fact of his resurrection is the basis on which the New-Testament Church rests (1 Cor. xv. 17; Rom. iv. 25).

*Third.* He did not rise from the dead as a singly solitary man, but as the sent One of God, the Messiah of the Scriptures, the first-fruits of them that slept; not of the *race*, but of the family; the first ripe sheaf of the harvest; the head pledge and image of those who shall rise from the dead in the morning of the first resurrection (Rev. xx. 5, 6; Luke xiv. 14, 15; xx. 35, 36; Matt. xxii. 30). He is the first-fruits of the harvest, the first-born of the family and the first *man* who really rose from the dead. The others were specimens rather of death postponed than of resurrection. He rose in immortal life and vigor; death hath no more dominion over him (Rom. vi. 9). Hence our position is in him, members of the risen Conqueror, and we are by faith enabled to look down on all earthly things as past or passing beneath our feet, while we fix the eye steadily on the heavenly things which Jesus has prepared for his people (John iii. 12).

*Fourth.* He rose *publicly*. He might have risen *privately*, and the efficacy of his atoning death would have remained untouched. In that case there would



have been *pardon*, but no proof of pardon; and if inspired men had testified that he rose from the dead and went to heaven, we would have believed it. But such was not the will of God. He appeared at least eleven times after his resurrection, and in every possible way removed the doubts of his disciples. He did not appear to the body of the Jews, but to those who were capable of identifying him. Nothing is more deceptive than the testimonies of great public bodies. Some cannot see well; others are far off, and have not the means of close inspection; some are talking with their neighbors in the press and crowd, and many of them must have only a general and indistinct knowledge of the person. Hence doubts could easily arise in honest minds; and, while there might be a general persuasion that the appearance was real, there would be wanting that feeling of interest in the person, of reverence and love for his character, which alone can make men suffer for their testimony's sake. How different was it with Jesus! He appeared to men and women, to learned men and ignorant men, in houses and in the open air; he walked with them, ate with them, breathed upon them, rebuked them, caused them to handle and see him. And who were these men? Those upon the whole earth who knew him best; the men who had most to gain by a falsehood, and all things—property, good name and life itself—to lose by asserting his resurrection. Yet they did so till their death. They sealed their testimony with their blood. There is no historical fact on record so strongly certified as is the resurrection of Christ.

*Fifth.* It is asserted in the passage that God raised him from the dead (Acts ii. 24); by the great power

of God (Rom. vi. 4), called the glory of the Father, he was raised from the dead. (Comp. Rom. viii. 11; 1 Cor. vi. 15; 2 Cor. xiii. 4). In this way the Creator set his seal upon the life, doctrine and character of Christ. He fulfilled his divine mission in the redemption of man; he revealed the true character of the invisible God; his life was holy; his words were truth; his example was perfect and his death the expiation of sin; and all this is sealed and confirmed by the great act of God in raising him from the dead.

*Sixth.* Yet, the Son of God being divine, resurrection is also his own act. He raised himself (John ii. 19; Matt. xxvi. 61; Mark xiv. 58). He had power to lay down his life and take it again. His incarnation, life, death and resurrection were parts of one system of voluntary love over which he at all times exercised complete self-disposing power. This view of his resurrection presents him to the Church as the head and fountain out of which flow power and life and all the manifold fullness of God. He is the manifestation of God in the flesh, proved to be human in that he died, and coequal with the Father in that he raised himself from the dead. Hence the Church always contemplates him as the Life.

*Seventh.* But, as the Godhead is one, it may fairly be conceived that, whatever be the special offices of the divine Persons, they all concurred, in some way or other, in every divine act. It is therefore true that the body of Christ was quickened by the *Spirit* (1 Pet. iii. 18; Rom. i. 4; viii. 11). Thus we arrive at the truth that the one act is attributed to each of the three Persons. This shows the working of the Trinity in

the administration of the kingdom of grace. So in the incarnation. The Father prepared the body (Heb. x. 5); the Son assumed it (Heb. ii. 16). How? By the Holy Ghost (Luke i. 35). The Father begins, the Son carries on, the work, and the Spirit completes it. So the Church, which is the body mystical: the Father draws its members to Christ, the Son's death and righteousness are made over to them, and the Spirit finishes the work by preparing them for heaven. The Father wills, elects, predestinates; the Son, the Mediator, executes; and the Holy Spirit perfects every work of God. The Son in every work has the middle place, and hence his name "Mediator" (1 Tim. ii. 5; Heb. viii. 6; ix. 15; xii. 24). The unity of the Mediator is as essential a truth as is the unity of God (1 Tim. ii. 5).

Yet, though all the Persons of the Godhead are engaged in the various works and acts of God, there is a prominence given to each Person in certain works. Thus, creation is more especially the *Father's* work, as being the *first* work or act possible, the Son and the Spirit concurring and assisting; redemption is the special work of the *Son*, the Father and the Spirit concurring and assisting; sanctification is the special work of the Holy Spirit, the Father and the Son acting a subsidiary part in it.

#### V. HIS EXALTATION.

*And set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come (ver. 20, 21).*

On this striking passage we have the following observations to make :

*First.* Think of the fact that the weak mortal man, the kinsman Redeemer whom we despised, from whom we hid our faces, is elevated to the highest dominion and sits at the right hand of God. The verb is used for the participle (as Bloomfield thinks) to strengthen the assertion of his glorious elevation.

The *hand* or the *right hand* is used in Scripture and in the East with wide and varied significations. (1) *Hand* means the executive part of a man, and “the hand of God” expresses the instrument by which he manifests himself in *chastisements*, as Ex. ix. 3; Deut. ii. 15; Judg. ii. 15; Job xxiii. 2; or in mercy and *blessing*, as 2 Chron. xxx. 12; Ezek. ix. 2; or in *inspiring* the prophets, as Ezek. i. 3; iii. 14, 22; xxxvii. 1; 2 Kings iii. 15. In these scriptures *hand* is the *instrument*. Hence Jesus is called the *arm of the Lord* (Isa. liii.; comp. Gal. i. 16), the revealer of Jehovah’s hidden purpose. All that is known of the power, love, grace and goodness of God is known only in him—the arm of love with the golden sceptre in the day of grace; the arm of power with the iron rod (Ps. ii.) in the day of judgment. (2) *Right hand* denotes the *place* of honor; and so Jesus has entered into the glory, honor and majesty which were prepared for the Head and the members from the beginning. He is the Ruler of the universe (see Matt. xxvi. 64; Mark xii. 36; xiv. 62; xvi. 19; Luke xx. 42; Acts ii. 34; vii. 55, 56; Heb. i. 2; Ps. ii. 7); his dominion as *Son* (Ps. cx.); his rule as Lord and King. The right hand is the hand of *acceptance* and fellowship (Gal. ii. 9). To give the right hand of fellowship is an intelligible expression

in all languages (*Aeneid*, vii. 266), and Jesus at the right hand of God is thus the accepted person and in the place of acceptance. God accepts us through the Man of his right hand, Jesus the Mediator. We *distribute* our *gifts* with the right hand; and so Jesus in the heavens at the right hand, and himself the right hand, of God dispenses to the Church and the creation all the treasures of Jehovah's bounty.

*Second.* But what is the meaning of *in the heavenly places*? It may mean the heavenly conditions or the heavenly *abodes*—the abodes above the heavenly spheres, the supercelestial habitations. The word *heavenly* seems to be the highest possible. It is given to the Father (Matt. xviii. 35). The "heavenly things" are opposed to "the earthly," and include all that pertains to the kingdom and to the glory of God. Jesus is in these abodes. He is in the house not made with hands—the many-mansioned house of the great Father whose love and beneficence are over all. Fancy fails us in contemplating these abodes. They are so bright and glorious that our feeble thought cannot comprehend their splendors. But, as they are the dwelling-place of God, they must correspond to his glory; and Jesus, the glorified Redeemer, is in the midst of the throne, to lead his people to fountains of living water; and there are the heroes of the faith, the prophets, the apostles and the martyrs. In those heavenly abodes, too, we shall meet the innumerable companies of the angels, the seraphim and the cherubim of glory; and there shall be no sin nor death nor separation any more. Oh, blessed house! Oh, blessed hope for wearied souls! Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!

*Third.* But *his is a universal dominion*, all created

things being subject to his sway. "He is exalted far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." The language is most emphatic, and seems laboring to find words to express the majesty of Christ. He is raised far above all *principality*—that is, far above all the *princes* and *rulers* of heaven, the abstract being put for the concrete, as is not unusual. The word *archè* ("principality") is applied to civil rulers (Luke xii. 11; Tit. iii. 1), as is the Hebrew *rosh* (Micah iii.) to the rulers of darkness (1 Cor. xv. 24; Eph. vi. 12) and to the rulers of the heavenly kingdom (Eph. i. 21; iii. 10; Col. ii. 10). This reveals the threefold character and rule of Christ—over the earth in *grace*, over the heavens in *glory*, and over the region of woe in *judgment* and justice.

(1) He is above all *principality*, wherever found. It is sweet here to think of his manhood. Is he, in this supereminent, inconceivable glory, still a man? Is he still Jesus of Nazareth, whose heart is love? Is that he, far above all heavens, who loved me and gave himself for me? Is that *my nature*, my human nature, that is insphered in such supercelestial glory? Oh, wonderful is redeeming love! God is love!

(2) Far above all *power*—that is, *authority*; all authority in heaven and earth is given to him (Matt. xxviii. 18). This is delegated authority, and presents Jesus as Man-Mediator, ruling over the creation; the Head of the Church and the universe: the universal Bishop and the universal King, in whose person reside all the fountains of royal and priestly power (Rev. i. 6). The word is applied to the *angels* (Eph. i. 21; iii.

10; Col. i. 16; ii. 10; 1 Pet. iii. 22), to the *demons* (Eph. vi. 12; Col. ii. 15; Eph. ii. 2), and to civil magistrates, showing also the triple crown of Christ—his authority over heaven, earth and hell. This is the authority which the man of sin usurps.

(3) *He is far above all might.* The Greek word is the origin of our term *dynamics*, and seems to denote *inherent strength*, capacity and ability; but it is very variously applied in the New Testament. It denotes the almighty energy of God in creating and sustaining the world (Matt. xxii. 29; Mark xii. 24; Luke i. 35; v. 17; Rom. i. 20; ix. 17; 1 Cor. vi. 14; 2 Cor. iv. 7, etc.). It is often joined with *glory*, and seems to denote omnipotent majesty (Matt. xxiv. 30; Luke xxi. 27). It is used, also, like the two former, to denote rulers of all kinds (Rom. viii. 38; 1 Cor. xv. 24; Eph. i. 21; 1 Pet. iii. 22). This word represents the rulers of the world as mere power-possessors, the mighty ones who execute the divine will, and Jesus is far above them all. These heavenly and earthly rulers may have, and very probably have, very extensive rule and authority under the sovereignty of God, yet they are all but shadows of the mighty One, the Son, the Heir, the First-Born of the creation, the appointed Mediator and Judge. He unites all glories in his person, and all extremes and varieties are in him harmonized.

(4) *He is far above all dominion or lordship*, the abstract here also for the concrete. The meaning is, There are many possessors or lords in the dominions of God, but Jesus is the true, original *Kurios*, Lord and Possessor, to whom all belongs. He is the King of kings and the *Lord of lords*. He is the Lord of all (Rom. x. 12; ix. 15; 1 Cor. xv. 25; Heb. ii. 8; viii.

1, etc.). The idea is the same as the stronger phrase "God over all," which is applied to him in Rom. ix. 5. "Lordship" implies *possession*, so Jesus (Rom. x. 9); *authority*, so Jesus (Matt. xxviii. 18); *state, attendance, court*, so Jesus (1 Pet. iii. 22).

(5) But the apostle adds, "*Far above every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come;*" on which we remark that *name* means "renown" or "glory," as the phrase "men of name," which we rightly render "men of renown" (Gen. vi. 4; comp. Num. xvi. 2; 1 Chron. v. 24); and the ignoble are called "sons of those without a name" (Job xxx. 8). The Hebrews say, as we do, "He has made himself a name" (Gen. xi. 4; Jer. xxxii. 20), and to acquire a *name* (2 Sam. vii. 23). The Lord promised to make them a praise and a *name* (Zeph. iii. 19), and gloriously-beautiful tents are *tents of name*. In this sense Jesus is elevated far above every name in the universe. He is the most celebrated Man on the earth. He is the most glorious Creature in the heavens. I say *creature*, for the passage is to be interpreted of his human nature. It is, then, a *great fact* that the nature of man in the person of the Christ is endowed with universal and everlasting dominion over all things. That the form of speech, "heaven and earth," means the universe needs no proof. Glorious truth, worthy of the interference of the Son of God! The highest becomes the lowest that the lowest may become the highest. The God-Man on earth is the Man-God in heaven. Abounding sin has yielded to super-abounding grace. The sin-stained and death-possessed manhood has been raised in the Head and Forerunner to peerless heights of glory. All transgressions and



shortcomings are obliterated and forgotten in the immaculate perfection of the Advocate and Mediator.

Oh what love is in the heart of God! What heights of glory are before us, my brother and companion in tribulation! How dear should every being in the form of man be to us! That form was assumed by the Son of God; that form is on the throne of heaven; that form, so low and debased as we often see it, is the royal form of creature-being, full of divine and endless capacities.

But we must stay our hand in these anticipations of man's destined dominion over all things, and turn to the following words of our text, which contains—

#### VI. THE HEADSHIP OF CHRIST.

*And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all* (ver. 22, 23).

He *hath put all things under his feet*. This is the fulfillment of the ancient prophecies (Ps. cx. and ii. and viii.) which announced the coming of the Messiah. This Headship embraces all orders and ranks and conditions of angels and men, and is therefore strictly and properly universal (Heb. ii. 7; Col. i. 18, 24). The working of God in the boundless universe is manifested through the Head and Mediator, in whom alone Creator and creature can meet. This heading-up of all things in the Christ is the end of God's purpose of blessing to the creation (Eph. i. 10). He is the connecting-link that binds it in faithful service to God, the *Unit* and *Head* in whom all its departments, varieties and orders of being are sustained and

harmonized. Then, again, we must contemplate this Headship as the *reward* of his humiliation, whose incredible depth is best seen in the way of contrast by the dignity and glory to which he is now exalted. It is not, however, merely personal; Jesus is the Head, and his reward draws with it the exaltation and glory of the members also. Then, again, in this passage we discern a twofold headship. He is the Head of and the Head over—the Head of the Church and the Head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all. The Church is his body and the world is his dominion.

We may analyze the doctrine of Headship still further by the following division: (1) He is King of the Jews, the Son of Abraham, and Head of the Hebrew race. (2) He is Husband, Head, King and Redeemer of the Church (1 Cor. xi. 3; xii. 27; Eph. i. 22; iv. 15; v. 23; Col. i. 18; ii. 10, 19). (3) As Son of man and second Adam he is Head and Lord of the human race (1 Cor. xi. 3; xv. 22). As Mediator and Lord after his ascension he is Head over the angels (1 Pet. iii. 22; Rom. viii. 28). They are all his ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation (Heb. i. 14). (4) He is Head over all created beings, the universal Head and Sustainer, in whom it has pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell.

## VII. PRACTICAL LESSONS.

We have thus done our best to grasp and illustrate the magnificent theme contained in our text. We have surveyed a wide and fruitful field; and if we

gather no fruit, it must be our own fault. We may want the eyes to see it or the taste to relish it, but the fruit is there in plentiful abundance.

(1) We may conclude with much probability that there are various orders of angels, and various ranks and degrees in the celestial hierarchies. The earthly is but a type of the heavenly in this respect. We cannot make out the exact degrees, but there is evidence that ranks and degrees exist.

(2) We see from the whole passage the value of the human family in the sight of God. We see, too, in a burning light, both the nature of sin and the nature of holiness—his estimate of them both. Why all this working in the Son? Why such an expensive machinery? That you might live; that you might obtain redemption and an everlasting kingdom. Hence sin can be no trifle. It is best seen in the light of the cross.

(3) We see Jesus, our Elder Brother, exalted to the right hand of God. He is our Friend, our Fore-runner, our Head. Is this not joy for you and me as we hear the thunder of Sinai over our heads? Ought not the heart to leap with joy at the thought of meeting him, seeing him, being with him and like him for ever? Remember that word: "We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 John iii. 2, 3, 4).

## CHAPTER IV.

And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved); and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.—EPIHESIANS ii. 1-10.

IN this passage we have two great contrasted ideas—the character of *man* and the character of *God*; and these are so placed, like light and shade in a picture, that they serve mutually to complete and illustrate each other.

The ancient commentators connected the first verse closely with the last of the preceding chapter, and thus gave the meaning “And you hath he filled who were dead in trespasses and sins,” which is indeed the simplest and easiest construction and brings out a beautiful and sublime truth: God has filled you with himself; his love, his grace, his gifts, his Holy Spirit,

are in you; ye are complete (filled) in him (Col. ii. 10); ye are filled with all the fullness of God (Eph. iii. 19).

Yet I cannot believe that Paul intended this in our text. Because (1) the contrast is not between an empty and a full vessel, but between a dead and a living man, and therefore our translators have well supplied the word "quicken," from the fifth verse: "*you hath he quickened.*" He does not quicken the hungry and fill the dead, but he fills the hungry and quickens the dead. The Scripture speaks of filling the *valleys* (Luke iii. 5); of filling up the measure of *sin* (Matt. xxiii. 30-32); of filling a *house* (Acts ii. 2; John xii. 3); of filling a city with doctrine (Acts v. 28); and many other similar examples occur in the Scripture. On the other hand, the usage of "quicken" is equally appropriate and distinctive. The dead creation draws its life from God, and hence "he quickeneth all things" (1 Tim. vi. 13); he quickeneth the spiritually dead (John vi. 63) and the literally dead (Rom. iv. 17; viii. 11; 1 Cor. xv. 22; 1 Pet. iii. 18). From all which we conclude that *the dead*, in our verse, is more naturally connected with the "quicken" of ii. 5 than the "filling" of i. 23. But (2) Col. ii. 13 is an exactly parallel passage, and Paul there uses the word "quicken;" so that it is natural to conclude that here also the same striking image was in his mind. But, leaving this point of verbal criticism, let us attend to the solemn statements of the apostle.

*First. Ye were dead in trespasses and sins.* Those who, following Rom. vi. 11, would translate these words "dead to trespasses and sins" (by the rite of

baptism), forget the very subject of which Paul is speaking, and that the turning-point in the passage is verse 4. The meaning is as clear as a sunbeam, and it is this: "Ye were dead in or by means of sin." No other interpretation is possible. This is very solemn: "*Ye were dead.*"

The frightful presence of death is manifested in many ways. The dead have no *motion*; they cannot come to God; they are helpless as was Lazarus till the voice of Jesus reached him; grace alone can quicken the dead soul. The dead have no *sensation*; they are past feeling; all the fountains of passion and emotion are sealed (Eph. iv. 19); so that before they can love God or hate sin they must get a new life. The dead have no *enjoyment*; food satisfies, beauty pleases and music charms no more. It is even so. Sin has perverted the moral sense and shut up the heart against the enjoyment of God himself. His character and his love please us no more. All the wonders of grace, as well as the excellences of the divine character which the cross reveals, fall upon us like sunbeams on the eyes of the dead. Lastly, the dead have no *restorative power*. Life—that mysterious, incomprehensible principle which, though ever present with us and filling all things, eludes research and baffles reason—has a wonderful *restorative power*. Indeed, life is a sort of miracle, for it reverses, suspends and modifies most of the laws of nature. In every plant, in every living creature, you see *life* assimilating and incorporating most heterogeneous elements, counteracting the law of gravity, nullifying the most potent chemical agencies and resisting the mechanical laws. The dead are destitute of all these mysterious powers; they remain as

they are, or they become more and more corrupt. There is no healing process going on in the dead soul by which, in the course of nature, it can become pure and healthy and happy in the enjoyment of God. It must first be made alive before it can exhibit the symptoms of life. This is the *first* assertion of the apostle: "*Ye were dead.*"

This fearful sentence is universal, and has continued ruling over us since the beginning of the world. We may imagine, therefore, what the enormity of apostasy must be in the sight of God, when one transgression has produced such fearful and universal ruin; we may conceive how awful the derangement in the moral and physical world must be, when it required the interference of incarnate Love to repair it; and we may rejoice in the hope of that transcendent glory which is to be the result of a redemption so stupendous. "To be dead in sins," says Bloomfield, "is to be entirely enslaved to sin, as a dead body is to the power of death, and to be as incapable of rising from it to a spiritual life as a corpse is of being restored to natural life." *Error, trespass or lapse* is to be distinguished from *sin*, which includes the more deliberate and habitual acts of disobedience to God. It is applied to the first transgression (Rom. v. 17); it is the Hebrew sin of ignorance (Ps. xix. 13) for which the cities of refuge were provided. There is no doubt, however, but in the New Testament the word is often used for sin in general (Rom. iv. 25; v. 15, 16, 20; 2 Cor. v. 19; Eph. i. 7; Col. ii. 13). The meaning, then, is that we are dead from two causes—the ignorance which we inherit from the fall, and the law of sin in the members which leads us to active rebellion against God.

*Second. Wherein in time past ye walked.* (1) On which observe that the natural evil life called the law of sin and death cannot be hid, but bursts forth in acts of all kinds like an overflowing fountain. They walked in them; they had pleasure in unrighteousness and followed the idolatries and delusions of heathenism with greediness. Their walk was not with God, who loves life and purity, but in the ways of iniquity, which can lead only to death. This is the *first* assertion of the apostle. Sin is an active operative principle; we walk in it and are pleased with it. (2) It was a walk "according to the *course of this world*"—according to the *age* (*αἰών*) of this world, the present dispensation of evil, when death reigns and Satan rages and all things are laboring under the bondage of corruption (Gal. i. 4). This course or age of the world is under the direction of Satan, its ruler and god (2 Cor. iv. 4; Eph. vi. 12), and is to end only at the coming of the Lord (Matt. xiii. 39). It is opposed to the world to come, and is therefore called the day of man (1 Cor. iv. 3, Greek text), because it is in all things contrary to the world to come, which is called the day of God. The *course of this world* is exactly the *Zeitgeist* of the Germans, and may well be rendered "the spirit of the times." He that walks according to this spirit is, says the apostle, dead in trespasses and sins. Brethren, judge yourselves, that ye may not be judged. The spirit of the world is evil.

*Third.* But Paul asserts here that the life and the walk of the unregenerate are guided and governed by the devil, who is here called "the prince of the power of the air," where the abstract *power* is put for the concrete "powerful hosts," as it is often enough among



ourselves. Theophylact expounds the passage by calling Satan the prince of the powerful spirits who dwell in the air. It was a common opinion among both heathen and Jews that the air was full of spirits (Diogenes, lib. viii. 221) who were called demons, and whose evil influence extended to the human race; and the Jews teach (Pirke Avoth), "*A terra usque ad firmamentum omnia esse plena turmis et præfectis*"—viz., "From the earth to the firmament, all things are filled with multitudes of spirits and their rulers." Ignatius, in his epistle to the Ephesians, expounds it of the warfare of the earthly and aerial spirits. The Holy Scriptures give no sanction to the dreams of the Rabbins or the less excusable dreams of some of the Fathers concerning angels, demons, magic and the warriors of the air. Yet we may gather the following facts from the word of God without treading on the boundaries of conjecture.

(1) There are two kingdoms—the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness—upon the earth; these have existed since the fall, and will continue more or less mingled together till the coming of Christ, when the separation shall take place, and the righteous and the wicked shall be gathered into the two poles of light and of darkness called heaven and hell.

(2) The fallen spirits or demons headed up in Satan, the prince of darkness, form a kind of diabolical kingdom, whose object is to seduce the human race from their allegiance and to propagate the principles of deceit and wickedness. Satan is their prince, either because he seduced them at the beginning or because he is the mightiest and the wisest, to whom, willingly or by compulsion, they yield some sort of obedience.

(3) Though imprisoned in chains under darkness (Jude 6), they have, by the permission of God, a certain reach and compass of activity; so that they can interfere in the affairs of men to accomplish their diabolical purposes. I suppose that in the passages where *Satan* and *devil* are mentioned (there is only one devil) he is to be contemplated, not as a single individual, but as the prince or head of the demons, and that his agency is to be taken as the consummated villany of them all. In him, roaring round us like a lion (1 Pet. v. 8), we have all the accusations which a broken law, a guilty conscience and a dreaded judgment-day can bring against us; in him we see embodied the principles of apostasy and the ever-deepening hatred to God and godliness which sin leaves in the heart of the fallen creature.

But what do we know of his agency? We know very much about it, and in the same way that we know anything of the agency of God—viz., from the Holy Scriptures. We know that Satan and his demons are in every way the *enemies of God* (Matt. iv. 1, 5, 6; xiii. 39; xxv. 41; Luke iv. 2–13; viii. 12; John xiii. 2; Acts x. 38; Eph. iv. 27; vi. 11; 1 Tim. iii. 6, 7; 2 Tim. ii. 26; Heb. ii. 14; James iv. 7; 1 Pet. v. 8; Jude 9; Rev. ii. 10); they are authors of moral and spiritual and physical evils (1 Tim. iv. 1; James ii. 19; Eph. vi. 12); they entered into the bodies of men, deranging the mind and darkening the understanding (Luke iv. 33, 34, 35; viii. 27; Matt. xvii. 18; Mark vii. 29). By divine authority, Jesus in the name of God, and the apostles in the name of Jesus, cast them out (Matt. vii. 22; ix. 34; x. 8; xii. 24–28; Mark i. 34, 39; iii. 15, 22; vi. 13; vii. 26; ix. 38, etc.). They

used the organs of men, spoke with the tongues of men, and so identified themselves with the human consciousness and will that neither the possessed nor the beholder could distinguish between the human and the diabolic. This is clear from the passages already referred to. We have the same mystery in the operations of the Spirit of God; the believer is led, guided and taught by the Holy Ghost, yet no man can positively distinguish the operations of the Spirit from those of the sanctified mind. In this case the human and the divine, in the other the human and the diabolical, are, so far as we are concerned, inextricably blended together. In the one we are rewarded, in the other punished, for the work of another in us. The mystery is the same, and the responsibility remains equally in both cases. It seems that, as death and sin are the elements in which these wicked spirits delight, so they frequent the scenes of desolation and drive their victims to the tombs (Matt. xii. 43; viii. 28; Mark v. 2; Luke viii. 27). (Comp. Baruch iv. 35, "she shall be inhabited of devils for a long time," and Isa. xiii. 21 and xxiv., where our *satyrs*—Luther's "*Feldteufel*" and De Wette's "*Waldteufel*"—is in the Septuagint translated "demons.") These demons are represented as doing great works of evil, signs and miracles for the purposes of evil (John x. 21; Rev. xvi. 14). (Comp. 2 Thess. ii. 9; Rev. xiii. 13; xix. 20.) The whole image-worship, idolatry and oracles of the heathen were their work (1 Cor. x. 20, 21; Acts xvi. 16 (Greek text, "Apollo"); Deut. xxxii. 17; Lev. xvii. 7; Ps. cvi. 37; xci. 6, Septuagint). Such are the works of the spirit of darkness, represented in our text as the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.

*Fourth. Disobedience* seems here to be personified and represented as the mother of Satan's household, in which, as the father of lies, he works his deeds of darkness: "*The spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.*" The Greek genitive is here put for the accusative by anacolouthon. Similar anomalies are not infrequent in the New Testament, and indeed in most writers. (See Acts xx. 3; xix. 34; xxiii. 30; John vi. 20; Gal. ii. 6; Winer's *Grammar*, 440.) Bloomfield thinks the preposition *according to* involves the *sense* of a genitive in the thought, and therefore the writer followed the *sense* rather than the grammatical construction. Those who would govern *spirit* by *αὐτοῦ*, "age" or "course," weaken the reasoning of the apostle, and must, like Macknight, interpret "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" of an evil disposition of the mind. This destroys the force and beauty of the passage in which the prince of the power of the air and the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience are set in apposition to each other. His sphere of working, his circle of operation, is in the children of *disobedience*. Obey! To hear and to obey is the law of the universe, from the highest to the lowest orders of being. When the Creator speaks, the will of the creature sinks into his, and reason's highest exercise is instant submission. It is fearful to think of disobeying God. It is also fearful to think that there is no neutral ground here. If God does not work in us, the devil does. The temple does not remain empty; the soul is too noble a creature to be neglected. Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners! My brother-man, are you an obedient son—a new creature in Christ Jesus? Or are you still,

like the Ephesians, a slave of Satan? Even so there is hope for you in the mercy of God, for the apostle says—

*Fifth. Among whom also we all had our conversation.* *Among whom* might well be translated “In which,” referring to trespasses and sins; but the present translation is better and stronger. There is a beautiful change of person here which is full of significance to the interpreter and to the believer. The “ye” is changed for *we*, in order to show the universality of sin, and also that the writer claimed to be nothing better by nature than the heathen idolaters. We are all in the same condition; we are all alike sinful before God. The word *among*, indeed, should not be taken in a *local* sense, as denoting that the Jews lived and sinned *among* the Gentiles, but rather in the signification of “after the example of,” as in Heb. iv. 11. The conclusion is that both are by nature equally guilty and need equally the redemption of Christ.

*Conversation* does not mean “talking;” there is no instance where it has this signification in the English Bible. It means, as the Greek original does, “deportment,” “conduct,” “character,” as in the following passages: 2 Cor. i. 12; Gal. i. 13; Eph. ii. 3; iv. 22; 1 Tim. iv. 12; Heb. xiii. 5, 7; James iii. 13; 1 Pet. i. 15, 18; ii. 12; iii. 1, 2, 16; 2 Pet. ii. 7; iii. 11. In Phil. i. 27 *conversation* signifies “citizenship;” so that to have a good conversation is to act worthy of the New Jerusalem, to which grace has called you. But this former conduct or conversation of theirs was “in the lusts of the flesh.” This refers (1) to carnal or sensual appetites, in which the heathen world was sunk, and Paul asserts in the text that the Jews were the same (Rom. vi. 12; vii. 8, 9; 1 Tim. iv. 9; and

many others). This implies and includes luxury, the pleasures of the table, drunkenness and all such forbidden pleasures. (2) These fleshly desires are seen most perfectly in the systems of false worship adopted by the heathen world in general. Baalim was the embodiment of lewdness; Buddhism is the embodiment of the dogma of priestly rule; so is Hindooism and so are other forms of religion. The Greeks and the Romans deified nature and the dead. Popery is a religion of sacraments. *The flesh* is the teeming fountain of vileness from which all these and similar systems flow; the *picture*, the *image*, the *idol*, the *oracle*, are the four head-forms or developments of false worship, and they all come from the flesh. (3) *Flesh* is always contrasted with *spirit*, and in general denotes alienation from God. The law of the flesh is sin; the works of the flesh are evil; the carnal mind is enmity against God (Rom. viii. 6, 7); to walk after the flesh is ungodliness; to be in the flesh is not to know or please God. Jesus Christ crucified it, and he gives us the principle and power of doing the same. His worship is pure; there is nothing carnal in it; its principle is *grace*, and it means the *law* of love. The hope which it inspires is immortality, and its end is the glory of God. Then, again, it is said, "They *fulfilled* the desires of the *flesh* and of the *mind*," literally yielding themselves to the current of the corrupt and deceitful lusts of the flesh—to all the stormy passions of the mind, as anger, wrath, envy, hatred, malice, ambition, and such-like enormities. The intellectual faculties and the active powers of man are all deranged by the fall; the whole man, mind and body, is under the bondage of corruption; for says the apostle—

*Sixth.* *We were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.* This is a Hebrew form of expression which cannot be mistaken. (See Isa. lvii. 4; Deut. xxv. 2; 2 Kings xiv. 14.) Deut. xxv. 2 is exactly illustrative of our text, for the Hebrew, "son of strokes," is rendered, both in the Septuagint and in our translation, "worthy of blows." This mode of expression is very common in Scripture. The son of possession is the heir (Gen. xv. 2); the son of oil means rich, fat, fertile (Isa. v. 1); the sons of the lightning are flames of fire or sparks (Job v. 7) [some translate this passage "swift-flying birds of prey"]; arrows are the sons of the bow (Job xli. 20); the morning star is the son of the dawn (Isa. xiv. 12). In the New Testament believers are children of light, children of wisdom, children of God, etc. On the other hand, Antichrist is the son of perdition (2 Thess. ii. 3); his followers, the children of the curse (2 Pet. ii. 14). Wicked men are the children of the devil (1 John iii. 10). Fallen men are the children of wrath (Eph. ii. 3). To be a child of wrath, then, is to be deserving the wrath of God. This is the terrible sentence of the apostle. All men are under wrath. They have forfeited their creation-standing, and the curse of a broken law rests on them. The same dark thunder-cloud of wrath is suspended over both Jew and Gentile, for they are all children of wrath, not by practice only, but also *by nature*. This is the hereditary taint which, like a subtle poison, has spread itself through the diseased body of mankind since the fall—which is, indeed, partly cured by the gospel, and shall be finally eradicated at the resurrection. The great law of Jehovah, that like shall produce like, runs its course, and the

descendants of the fallen must remain fallen and leave fallen successors behind them until it shall please the Creator to alter the constitution of the human race. Nor does it serve any good purpose to torture the text, like a saint writhing under the hands of papal inquisitors, by the most improved methods of textual and verbal criticism. *Nature* will remain nature after ignorance and unbelief have done their utmost to pervert the meaning of the text. By nature, then—that is, by the law of their birth and generation—all men are children of wrath. What! the whole race? Yes, the whole race, without any exception, save ONE; and if you think this conclusion fearful, then flee to the refuge which God has provided in his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. He is the way and the truth and the life. Come to the cross; you are safe there. He delivers from the wrath to come. You are no worse *than others*. We are all descendants of the same common father, and share his fortunes. We sinned in him and fell with him. The streams are not sweeter than the fountain that sent them forth. Yea, they rather settle into stagnant pools of unendurable pollution. The Flood, indeed, washed away the memorials of our guilt, but the very ark bore within it the fountain of vileness, which poured forth its bitter waters before the deluge had fully subsided. Thus the tree remains corrupt, and the fountain remains bitter, and the viper-blood retains the venom of the serpent, to the last; and there is no way of escape for you or for me, or for any, save in the eternal mercy which has opened a door of hope in the redemption of Jesus Christ. For—

*Seventh. God who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith he loved us, etc. (ver. 4).* Here the



apostle leaves the character of *man* and leads us to contemplate the character of *God*. We have seen the creature, and we are now to see the Creator. The depths of sin and apostasy are to be met in the depths of divine mercy; so that the fall and the recovery, the disease and the remedy, the malignity of Satan and the benevolence of God, are parts of the apostolic picture. *But* is the turning-point in the sentence: "Ye were, *but* God is;" ye were children of wrath, but God is rich in mercy. Let us, then, with joyous hearts contemplate for a little the riches of God as unfolded in his word.

*Mercy* is the aspect of God which the sinner first and most needs. While we are condemned criminals it is vain to speculate on crowns or coronets or heavenly mansions. The guilt must be removed, the condemnation obliterated, in the first place; and to comfort fallen sinners Paul announces that God is rich in mercy. Who dwells in the cloudy sky? Shall he receive or reject the penitent? Dare I approach his awful throne, all wretched and guilty as I am? The apostle answers, He is rich in mercy.

But let us contemplate the riches of God a little more generally, and see how his bounty meets and supplies all our wants.

(1) We are *creatures* who have lost all, have nothing and need much; and to meet this God is rich in *goodness* (Rom. ii. 4). He is good—that is, he is God; for the name "God" is derived from his goodness. He is the Good One—the fountain from which all good gifts flow. The earth and the heavens, the laws of the moral and physical worlds, are conceived and established out of pure goodness. His fullness overflows,

and worlds and boundless systems of worlds arise to manifest and enjoy his goodness.

(2) Are we impotent and incapable of procuring the divine favor? Then, says Paul, he is rich in *grace* (Eph. ii. 7), which is the same nearly as "the rich in mercy" of my text. You need no merit, you require no preparation, in coming to God. He is rich in *grace*, and grace excludes the very idea of merit and the works of the law altogether. Do not wait to get new clothes or to put on clean ones. Come to God at once,

"Just as you are, without one plea  
But that the Saviour died for thee."

Come, and he will give you the new robes, the new name, the new hope, the new heart. He will make all things new.

(3) But wherein is this riches of mercy seen? It is seen in the degradation and ruin from which it delivers us; it is seen in the glory and blessedness to which we are raised; it is seen in the number and heinousness of the sins which it forgives; and it is seen in the greatness of the number of the saved. The scheme of mercy embraces all the ages of the world and all the nations of the earth, and the glorious issue will be the myriads of the heavenly companies around the throne (Rev. v. 9-11; xiv. 1-3). We believe that all children dying in infancy are saved through this mercy, and this makes at once nearly one-third of the human race. We may hope also that many of the heathen who have never heard, and therefore have never rejected, the gospel may be allowed to share the riches of his mercy. Then we must also remember that in the millennial ages

the whole earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea; so that we may well believe that, taking the race of man as a whole, the lost may bear some such proportion to the saved as the convicts and criminals do to the peaceable inhabitants in a well-ordered state. He is rich in mercy.

(4) But there is still another aspect of the human character which the riches of God meets. We long for power, for fame, for glory and immortality. We would be *great*, and the aspiration is not in itself wrong, but it is often misdirected. We find ourselves in this world bounded on every side by insurmountable barriers, baffling all our efforts of knowledge and of power. But are we satisfied? No, no! The soul longs for complete knowledge, pines for the possession of power, seeks to wing her flight through the sparkling stars and circumambient worlds up to the empyrean throne itself, from whence proceed such manifestations of wisdom, beauty and strength. And God meets this longing of the soul by that other word, "the riches of his glory" (Phil. iv. 19). He is rich in *goodness*, he is rich in *grace*, he is rich in *mercy*, and he is rich in *glory*. Here honorable ambition may expand itself; and the soul, enlarged and purified by the Spirit of God, may drink deeply and more deeply for ever, may ascend higher and higher for ever, may approach for ever and evermore, in love, wisdom, knowledge and power, the character of Him who loved us and whom we love, who was born in a stable and executed on a cross, who is God over all and blessed for ever, the Redeemer of our souls and the Judge of the world. He is rich in glory. Glorious hope for our longing souls! Come on, then,

brother! Be of good cheer: great things are before us. We shall get behind the scenes yet, and contemplate wisdom, power and strength in their unapparent fountains, and perhaps hold unutterable communion with the Infinite himself. This is something for those who were children of wrath. But this is the way of God. His path is in the deep waters, and his mercy, like the bow in the cloud, never seems so glorious as when shining over a stormy and deserted world.

(5) *Mercy* is nearly allied to pain or *misery*, and the ideas are in most languages connected. It is not impossible that the Greek *eleos*, "mercy," may come from the Hebrew *chil*, "to be in pain," as the English word is from *misericordia*, the "pain of the heart," the sorrow which goodness feels at the sight of wretchedness and woe. It is this feeling (if we may apply it so) in the heart of our heavenly Father which is the fountain of redemption. (See Luke i. 50, 78.) It is applied to Christ (Jude 21). The word, however, though properly signifying "mercy," is applied in the Scriptures in a much wider sense, and sometimes expresses the ideas of piety, goodness and religion in general (Matt. ix. 13; xii. 7). The Greek phrase *to do mercy with*—that is, to show mercy to any one (Luke i. 72; x. 37; James ii. 13)—is the exact translation of a similar construction in Hebrew (Gen. xx. 13; 1 Sam. xv. 6). But let us now proceed to the next clause, which is—

*Eighth. For his great love wherewith he loved us.* Mercy, then, flows to us through love. Love is the fountain, and mercy is one of the streams that flow from it. This love of God is twofold, according to the objects on which it rests, and may be called the

love of pity and the love of complacency; for certainly the feeling with which he loved and loves the world, fallen and wretched and rebellious, must be altogether different from the love which he bears to the Church which he has redeemed and purified, and ornamented as a bride adorned for her husband. His love of pity leads him to relieve the wretched; his love of complacency is attracted by the pure and the beautiful. The love of pity is the fountain of redemption; the love of complacency is the fountain of glory. The love of pity is general, and has no limit save the circumference of misery; the love of complacency moves in a smaller circle, and rests only on the holy and the good. Pity goes out into the highways and hedges to relieve its objects, and complacency draws them to itself to enjoy them. Incarnation shows love coming to relieve, and ascension shows love drawing up its object to glorify and enjoy it. The incarnate God standing on our earth is the expression of Jehovah's pity for mankind. The Son of man glorified in the Father's throne is the type and expression of his love to the Church. This is the Scripture doctrine of a universal, and yet a special, love of God. The Methodists dwell on the love of compassion for all, and the Calvinists on his love of complacency to the Church. They are not inconsistent. Love is associated with God in many ways in the Holy Scriptures, and each seems to bring to light lovelier and brighter views of his character.

(1) He is the *God of love*—the very Source and Fountain from which all love flows. It dwelt eternally in him, and he is the Author of whatever streams of it may be found in us and the other creatures. This is a very attractive view of God, and teaches us to praise

him for the gift of a tender and loving heart. (See 2 Cor. xiii. 11.) *God is love* (1 John iv. 8). He identifies it with himself, and claims love as the true and expressive token of his presence. In his nature, in the glorious attributes of his majesty, in the creation of the boundless universe, and still more especially in the cross of Christ, he is love. The signs and tokens of love are *four*: (a) We *think* of those whom we love. Love begins in the heart and leads away the thoughts over seas, rivers, mountains, and all kinds of impediments, to its object. Such is the love of God. Its dwelling-place is his own bosom, and before all worlds his delights were with the sons of men. (b) Love seeks *fellowship* with its object, and God visited us in the person of his Son that he might woo our fond hearts from the world to himself. (c) True love willingly *suffers* for its object if need be, and the affection which abides not this test is not genuine. God cannot suffer, but his incarnate Son did, and all the fountains of the great deep of divine sorrow were broken up on the cross. (d) Lastly, love seeks to *exalt* its object; and so God, having taken our nature into union with his own, exalted and glorified the Son of man, our Elder Brother and Head, with his own right hand, in heavenly places, far above all principality and power.

(2) The form *love of God* is used by the Greeks and by us, and by all nations, in both an active and a passive sense—that is, the love which he bears to us (Rom. v. 5; Eph. ii. 4) and the love which we bear to him (Luke xi. 42; John v. 42; 1 John ii. 5). In our text it is *active*. It is the love wherewith he loved us—that boundless love which ever flows and never ebbs in the heart of God.

(3) The apostle calls it *great much*—abundant, manifold love. We see this greatness in the character and majesty of the *Giver*, in the fullness and worth of the *gift*, in the greatness of the *obstacles* which it had to surmount before it could reach us, and in the glorious *end* which it had in view—the redemption of a world. His love to us was indeed great. Follow his Son from Bethlehem to the tomb, from the tomb to the depths of Hades, and from thence to the right hand of God, and say, “What brought him through such spheres?” and the answer is, Love—his love to thee. He would show us what his Father is and how truly great his love can be. He would silence thy fears, brother, by revealing to thy heart a God of love. As our great poet says,

“Love without end, and without measure grace.”

(4) This love is enhanced still more by its being exercised toward us when we were *dead in trespasses and sins*. We were dead when he quickened us, unloving when he loved us, and lying in our blood when he said, “Live!” He begins the work of grace in the soul. If we love him, it is because he first loved us; if we choose him freely as our portion, it is because he chose us in his Son before the foundation of the world (Eph. i. 4).

*Ninth.* *Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved); and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus (ver. 5-7).*

*The believer's union with Christ.* This truth, in the

hands of the apostle, becomes the centre of a system of divine operations in Christ and in the Church. Jesus Christ is not contemplated as an individual man, but as the federal Head and Sustainer of the body—the Husband from whose side the New-Testament bride was taken, the Foundation-Stone on which the temple rests, the second Adam and Lord from heaven, in whom the destinies of the human family are summed up and unfolded. Hence the apostle refers to this union, the manifold works of the Holy Spirit in converting, quickening and glorifying the Church.

(1) *He hath quickened us together with Christ.* The translation is quite literal, and the doctrine clear and beautiful. *To quicken together with* occurs only in our text and in Colossians (ii. 13), where it is followed by *with (sun)*, and the meaning explained by the words “having forgiven you all trespasses;” and in our text it is explained by the parenthetical clause “by grace ye are saved.” This quickening is the spiritual resurrection of the soul from the state of sin and death as the prelude and pledge of the literal resurrection at the coming of the Lord. But how is our quickening by the Holy Spirit connected with the resurrection of Christ? I answer, The believer is, in the word and in the divine Mind, always contemplated in union with his Head and Redeemer. He was chosen in him (Eph. i. 4) : so we are crucified with him (Gal. ii. 20) ; we are buried with him by baptism unto death (Rom. vi. 4). Our text says we are quickened with him in his resurrection, and we have ascended with him from Mount Olivet to the heavenly places. What passed upon the Head passed upon the members; and all the members of his body are, in the purpose of the Father and in their own



unconquerable faith, identified with the dying, rising and glorified One. He took their place; he bore their burden; he expiated their guilt. Hence we *reckon* ourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. In all our trials and temptations we draw comfort and strength and assurance of victory from the death and resurrection of our victorious Head. We say to sin, death and the devil, when they come to tempt us, "What have we to do with you? We are dead already; we have risen with Jesus; the law has been kept for us, and Satan, the accuser, has been cast out." This is our answer to all our enemies. This is the strength and victory of faith.

(2) Consider your position as believers, and mark the power of faith and the consequences that flow from it. You are not only quickened, but raised up and seated with him in the heavenly places. This does not mean merely that you are baptized and made members of the visible Church, or that you are believers in the orthodox faith—though these are doubtless great blessings—for regeneration itself is an "earthly" thing (John iii. 12). The heavenly things are those connected with the kingdom of heaven, and the heavenly places are the mansions which Jesus has gone to prepare. Faith measures no distances of space or time, but, fixing the eye steadily, like Stephen, on the Conqueror and Elder Brother, reasons thus in the heart of the believer: "In him I have died to sin; in him I have escaped from the power of Satan by resurrection; in him I have ascended to the heavenly mansions. I am complete in him. My heart, my home, my treasure, are all in heaven. My Lord, my Love, my Life, is there also. Faith shall soon be changed into sight, and I shall

see him as he is, and be with him and like him for ever.”

(3) The seventh verse shows the *purpose* which God had in view in these acts of love and power—to manifest the riches of his grace. The great end is self-manifestation. He will exhibit to the world of angels and of men as much as may be needful and as they can bear of his fullness. He still remains the unknown, the unutterable, the unapproachable, God; but such radiance as we can bear breaks forth from the Fount of glory. God has quickened us and raised us up with Christ, says the apostle, to teach the future ages the riches of his grace. Fishermen and tent-makers shall now fish for men and build up the spiritual temple of God. The weak are made strong, the poor are made rich, the ignorant are made wise, by grace. Grace shall make despised Galileans and Nazarenes more excellent and honorable than princes, more noble in their deportment than kings, more steadfast in purpose and more fearless in danger than the legions of the Cæsars. Here is love which is stronger than death; here is patience which persecution cannot conquer; here is a purely moral force—the force of victorious grace—which wins its way to the stern heart of the persecutor and plants the cross on the throne of the Cæsars. He will show all ages and generations what grace can make us do and suffer for his sake, what strength and beauty and meekness, what heroism and moral constancy, lie sleeping in the human mind, ready to be awakened by the hand of *grace*. None should despair of becoming or doing anything when grace has made us, the apostles, what we are. But we should not limit the *us*, in verse 7, to the apostles. It embraces the whole Church and

the whole period of the Church's history, and is intended to show us the *plan of the ages* (Eph. iii. 11) which he has purposed in the Christ for the unfolding of his manifold wisdom by the Church in the sight of men and angels and the whole universe. The election, the redemption, the Headship of Christ, the quickening and building up of a Church, the advent and work of the Spirit, the intercession of Christ in heaven, his coming again, the resurrection of the righteous and the everlasting kingdom are but parts of the eternal purpose of the Father for manifesting the riches of his grace. This grace, too, is given out of mere *kindness* or *goodness*, and, like every other gift, comes through Christ Jesus.

What a view this gives us of God! How grace abounds over sin! What a view of the worth and dignity of man! The fallen race lifted up in Jesus to the heights of glory and made the medium for manifesting God to the whole creation for ever! We can hardly believe it. Faith staggers at the riches of God's grace, and even the eye of hope recoils from such peerless honor and glory.

*Tenth.* *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them* (ver. 8-10).

*Salvation by grace.* "By grace are ye saved." This is the glorious assurance which faith in the divine testimony brings into the heart. It is an ever-continuing enjoyment and an ever-dawning hope, by which the two kingdoms, the present and the future, the vis-

ible and the invisible, are brought to meet. *Ye are saved.* The apostle says nothing of a salvable condition in which grace gives us some help in the way of saving ourselves. He speaks the language of faith universally, which has its function specially in its appropriating power; we *are* dead, we *are* risen, we *have* ascended with our Lord, we *are* saved. We will not doubt the goodness and the faithfulness of God. He has begun and he will finish the work. His promises are *yea* and *amen* in Christ Jesus, and we are enabled and warranted to say with joyful confidence, "*We are saved.*"

"*For* by grace are ye saved." Every word is emphatic here, and *for* is full of deep significance. It carries us back to the wonderful works just mentioned. Are ye astonished at these glories—Jesus at the right hand of God, the Church quickened, the overflowing riches of God's grace, the assurance of the believer? Then remember it is all by *grace*; and when the God of grace works, he works in a manner worthy of himself. These blissful tidings are worthy of all acceptance, *for* grace is the fountain of them all.

This salvation by grace is directly opposed to salvation by works, and characterizes the gospel as distinguished from all other forms of religion. Here pardoning mercy is proclaimed from on high, and all sinners are invited to accept it without money and without price. It is opposed to the mixtures of the papists, by which the merits of the Redeemer are represented as a standing capital to supplement the deficiencies of the saints; it is opposed to sacramental religion in general, by which the external acts of certain ecclesiastical functionaries pass over the child, the

boy and the man, until finally, in the article of death, by anointing or confession, he is transmitted to the other world as formally as a package by the railway, while the conversion of the soul and personal faith may have nothing to do in the matter. We are not so saved, says Paul, for we are saved by *grace*. This salvation by grace, however, is received through *faith*. Faith is the hand that receives the gift, the eye that sees God's riches, the ear that hears his voice. Without this the soul must remain within the limits which the law of sin and death has assigned her; her energies are cramped and fearfully misdirected, her eye and ear sealed against the heavenly message and all her inner fountains tainted with the poison of sin. Faith opens the prison and admits the light, while a new principle of life vivifies all within, and new and immortal hopes break through the clouds without. Hence the solemn assertion of the Scripture that without faith it is impossible to please God. This very faith, too, Paul adds, *is the gift of God*. Theophylact says here, "Not faith, but salvation through faith, is the gift of God;" and many have followed the same judgment. Most Arminians, indeed, argue that the Greek *neuter* pronoun for "that" cannot refer to *faith*, which is *feminine*. But, in the first place, the Greeks may and do use this pronoun, as we use the word "that" and the Germans *das*, in reference to all genders, having the word *thing* understood. Thus in Phil. i. 28 this same neuter refers to a feminine antecedent; in Eph. vi. 8 the same neuter pronoun has no neuter antecedent; to which add Gal. iii. 17; iv. 19. The same usage is frequent among the best classical writers; so that there is no grammatical objection to the asser-

tion that faith is the gift of God. But, secondly, Paul has told us already, in verses 4, 5, 6, that salvation is in every conceivable way from God, and it is not easy to suppose that he repeats the same in verse 8; whereas the sense is beautiful and rises to a noble climax when we interpret the words in their natural order, thus: Your new life is a gift; your position as risen with Christ is a gift; the object on whom you believe, the Son of God, is a gift; and the faith by which ye receive it is also a gift. All is grace; the salvation and the faith are alike from him; and hence the apostle adds, "Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

## CHAPTER V.

Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: but now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.—EPHESIANS ii. 11-22.

THE apostle has already brought to the notice of his readers the character of God and the fullness of his grace, and now, to enhance this fullness still more, by way of contrast he reminds them of what they were (ver. 11).

*First. Ye were Gentiles*—that is, ye belonged to the idolatrous world, which was entirely ignorant of the true God. “Jews” and “Gentiles” are, therefore, everywhere used to designate the human race—those

who worship the living God and those who worship idols (Matt. iv. 15; x. 5; Mark x. 33; Acts iv. 27; Rom. ii. 14). In the Old Testament the Jews, the *people* and all the rest of mankind, are *goim* or *ethnicks* (Isa. xlii. 6; Deut. xxvi. 18, 19; xxxii. 43). Such cases as Acts x. 22; xxvi. 4 are exceptional, and only confirm the general rule. In Acts xxvi. 17 the writer returns to the natural and common distinction of the *people* and the *Gentiles*. Thus, in our Epistle, Paul, the Jew, is a prisoner for you Gentiles (iii. 1); the Gentiles are made fellow-heirs with the Jewish Church (iii. 6); the Ephesian converts are not to walk, as other Gentiles, in the vanity of their minds (iv. 17). Thus this radical distinction is kept up through the entire Scripture, and is intended, no doubt, to typify the sheep and the goats, the wheat and the tares, the children of God and the children of the wicked one. Ye were Gentiles, idolaters, degraded and sunk in superstition, with all manner of defilement, when *grace* found you out and directed you to the holy and merciful God. Ye were under the curse, but ye are now partakers of the blessing; ye were dead, but are now alive; ye belonged to the prince of darkness, but now ye are members of Christ and heirs of the kingdom of God.

*Second. Ye were in the flesh.* What does that mean? It means natural generation or descent. Ye were shut out by your very birth from the blessings of the Jewish covenant; or the contrast may be, "Ye were Gentiles in the flesh, but ye are now Gentiles in the spirit." To be in the flesh, to walk after the flesh, to do the will of the flesh, are descriptions of the natural state of man, in which it is impossible to please God (Rom. viii. 1-4,



etc.; vii. 5, 18, 25; Gal. v. 13; Col. ii. 11; 2 Pet. ii. 10, 18; 1 John ii. 16). Hence the necessity of the Holy Spirit to purify the ruined temple and rebuild it in beauty and strength for the service of God. Ye are, therefore, no longer in the flesh, but in the Spirit; old things have passed away and all things have become new. The world has lost its beauty, its power, its attractiveness. The flesh is crucified in Christ, and the soul, like a new-created star, takes its place in the system which moves around the Sun of righteousness.

*Third. The twofold circumcision.* The Jews contemptuously called the Gentiles "the Uncircumcision," the abstract being put for the concrete, as is not unfrequently done (Eph. i. 21). This contempt and scorn, says the apostle, is false in principle; besides, it is usually resorted to by those who are the circumcision made *by hands*—the mere nominal Jews, who observe a vain formalism and place all their hopes on ritual observances. They are not the true circumcision which the Lord recognized, but a sect in whom the circumcision of the heart made without hands has no place. They, like many in all ages, retain the shell and reject the kernel, substituting law for life and glorying in distinctions which prove their own apostasy and shame. They are not the true circumcision at all, but the *concision*, and have no real pretensions to the Israel of God (Phil. iii. 2). This is the constant tendency of the human mind, and it proves—if other proofs were wanting—how deeply we have fallen from God. Judaism, according to the intention of the Founder, was a noble structure, a luminous dome, through which at many points heavenly light broke forth upon the

people; but in the hands of sectaries and rabbis it became the Procrustes-bed on which the faith and the hope of the nation were offered up. The papacy is at the present time little better. The homage of the heart is inconsistent with an imperative system of ritualism.

*Fourth. Ye were without Christ.* This twelfth verse shows us fully, according to the apostle, the state of the heathen in the sight of God. They have no fellowship with the Mediator, and no knowledge of the hopes and glories which his name inspires. Jesus Christ is the only deliverer who can break their chains, and they know him not; their bondage is grinding and their superstition degrading, and he alone can break their chains. This is the statement of our text, and history confirms its truth. Is there among the records of time any one nation which by culture has from the native powers of man attained to the knowledge of one living God and to the dignity of intelligent worshippers without revelation? No! There may be found in heathen nations civilization and science and patriotism, and many of both the sterner and the more refined virtues which adorn humanity, but without Christ there is no divine knowledge, no pure worship, no certain hopes of immortality. Greece, Rome, India, with their various systems of pantheism, demon-worship and polytheism, clearly show the bent of the human mind. Yet being *without* Christ is not the worst conceivable condition of man: there remains the still more fearful enormity of rejecting him; and this latter seems to be the predicted evil which is to draw down the judgments of the second advent (2 Thess. ii. 1-13; Jude 16). It is fearful to think of those who are without Christ, and who, having the means of

knowing him, prefer voluntary ignorance to the life and hope which he brings; more fearful still to see individuals and nations voluntarily throwing off the gospel yoke and with murderous hostility to the doctrines of grace rushing into either the extravagance of superstition or the hopelessness of unbelief.

*Fifth.* *Ye were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel.* *Politeia*—"polity," "citizenship," "commonwealth"—carries the mind at once to the idea of a city and society and social duties (Phil. iii. 20; Acts xxii. 28; Eph. ii. 12). There arose in the midst of the Jewish economy the idea of a city as the proper home and resting-place for the soul. No longer wandering like Abraham, or in bondage like his descendants in Egypt, or passing through the wilderness in tents, but settled in their own land, free from the yoke of bondage and rejoicing in the Holy City, where God, their Lawgiver and King, dwelt,—it was natural that Jerusalem should occupy a prominent place in the feelings and the sympathies of the nation. Besides, grace is essentially diffusive and man is essentially social; and hence, to suit the characteristics of both, the promises often take the form of a city of habitation or a kingdom of rest and peace. Abraham looked for a city (Heb. xi. 10), and we look for our citizenship at the coming of the Lord (Phil. iii. 20), when, along with the glorious companies of the redeemed, we shall come to Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven (Heb. xii. 22, 23). And finally, when the storms of this sinful world are over, the Holy City, the New Jerusa-

lem, descends from heaven prepared as a bride adorned for her husband, and the long-promised kingdom of glory begins. These are bright hopes and gracious promises, and they seem very naturally to assume the form of a *city*. There, God is the King; Jesus the Redeemer is before the throne; the Holy Spirit fills every heart with joy; the citizens are all the redeemed; and holy communion with God and with one another transfuses ecstasy through all hearts.

Is not such a heaven worth seeking, worth longing for, living for—dying for if need be? This is the birthright of the sons of God. This is the citizenship which dates from Calvary and is sealed with blood. This is the commonwealth from which the Ephesians in their state of nature were shut out, and from which all unbelievers are, and ever must be, shut out. Lord, I believe! help thou mine unbelief.

*Sixth. Strangers to the covenant of promise.* We may observe here that God, from the beginning, has been manifesting himself in the way and form of a covenant, which does not mean a bargain entered into between God and his creatures, but a statement of the divine method of procedure and a promise of acceptance or obedience on the part of the people. We mention some of the most remarkable of these covenant transactions.

(1) God established his covenant with Abraham and the patriarchs, in which he took them into relations of friendship and peace with himself, promising to be their God and Defender and claiming from them a hearty obedience. The outward sign of the covenant was circumcision, and hence it is called “the covenant of circumcision” (Acts vii. 8). This was the

germ of the whole Jewish economy, and from it the civil and religious polity of the nation took its form and development (Gen. xv. 1-18; xvii. 1-19; Luke i. 72, 73; Acts iii. 25; Gal. iii. 17). The Abrahamic covenant was renewed to Moses when the people had arrived at Mount Sinai, and, being emancipated from slavery, were capable of receiving and enjoying a free legal constitution. This solemn transaction between God and the Hebrew nation, in the midst of awful manifestations of divine power, took the form of a comprehensive law, to which the people vowed perpetual obedience (Ex. xix. 8). Hence the Ten Commandments are called "the words of the covenant" by way of eminence, as being the most essential part of it, and of the whole law; the tables on which they were written are the "tables of the covenant" (Deut. ix. 9); the whole law is called "the book of the covenant" (Ex. xxiv. 7); Moses is the mediator of it (Gal. iii. 19). The Sabbath was the special sign of this national covenant (Ex. xxxi. 12-18), and all the hopes and fears, the promises and threatenings, which formed the character of the nation flow naturally from it. This was the old covenant, the dispensation of law, in which the veiled Israelite beheld the veiled Moses, and is contrasted with the new covenant, in which we all, with unveiled face beholding in the unveiled face of Christ, as in a mirror, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord (2 Cor. iii. 14-18). The old covenant was national, federative and legal; the new is individual, personal and gracious. The condition of the former was *obedience*; the condition of the latter is *faith*. *Do and live* was the law of Moses;

*Believe and live* is the gospel of Christ. These various dispensations are called covenants of *promise* because of the promises contained in them. The heathen of Ephesus were strangers to these promises. They knew not how the bow in the cloud protects the earth from a deluge for ever (Gen. ix. 13), nor how the sacrifices of the nations, Jews and Gentiles, pointed to the great Sufferer for the expiation of sin. They were shut out from the immortal hopes of the gospel, and the promises of grace and forgiveness, like stars in the night, shone not upon them.

(2) The Hebrew word for *covenant* signifies "cutting," and conveys an allusion to the manner of making oaths and covenants in ancient times. This was done by the contracting parties meeting, sacrificing an animal, cutting it into two parts, passing between them, sprinkling the blood upon themselves and imprecating similar destruction on the breaker of the covenant (Gen. xv. 9; Jer. xxxiv. 18, 19). This practice gave rise to the expression, so often found in Scripture and elsewhere, "to cut the covenant," which means to contract or confirm the covenant. The Greeks use the same form, and the Latin *fœdus*, "covenant," is derived from a term expressive of the filth and pollution of the bloody victims. When the contracting parties passed between the pieces of the victim they said, "*Let it not be so done to me.*" The same custom is alluded to in the Hebrew word for "to swear," which is derived from the number *seven*, because seven lambs were to be sacrificed on the making of solemn covenants (Gen. xxi. 28). The ancient Arabs confirmed their covenants and oaths, not by cutting up sacrificial victims, but by cutting their own flesh and using imprecations over human blood (Herod., iii.

8). The same custom of confirming oaths and covenants by shedding blood prevailed among almost all nations—among the Chaldeans (Ephrem. Syr. on Gen. xv. 19); among the Greeks (Plut., *Quest.* c. 111); among the Armenians (Tacit., *Annal.* 12, 47); among the Lydians (Herod., i. 74); among the Scythians (Herod., iv. 70). These customs took their rise, no doubt, from the universal prevalence of sacrifice, and point darkly but prophetically to the covenant God of the Bible and the atoning Sacrifice of Calvary. They all say to the ear of reason and of faith, “Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.” How awful is this truth! All covenants pointed to this one; all dying victims, to the cross of Christ; all agreements, to the reconciliation between God and man; all shedding of blood, to the great atonement for the sin of the world (Heb. ix. 22).

*Seventh. They had no hope*—“not having hope,” as the Greek reads. This is the state of those who know not God. They behold not the objects of hope; they are not brightened by the radiance of the promises. How, then, could they be filled with the anticipations of hope? Hope dawns in the soul and expands more and more with the entrance and increase of the knowledge of God (John xvii. 3). It is closely connected with the sister-graces faith and charity (1 Cor. xiii. 13) and completes the circle in which the believing soul moves. Faith grasps the cross and rests upon it as upon a rock. Hope, beaming, radiant hope, anticipates the crown. Love, the life of our hearts, the atmosphere of our lungs, fills up the space between these extremes and unites us with Him whose name and whose nature are love. We are no longer without hope; our God is

the God of hope (Jer. xiv. 8); the hope of righteousness nerves our hands to fight the good fight of faith (Gal. v. 5); the hope of glory beams down upon us from the heavenly throne, saying, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." We live rejoicing in hope (Rom. xii. 12); over the sleeping saints we sorrow not as those who have no hope (1 Thess. iv. 13); and, like the illustrious Howard, we feel that the best motto for our tombs is "*Christus mea spes*" ("Christ is my hope").

Oh, sweet, mild, gentle visitant! May thy heavenly light burn brighter and brighter till the morning star of hope blends into the radiance of the Sun of righteousness! Be ever present in our trials like the rainbow in the storm, and in the last struggles of our mortal life gild the unknown wastes of eternity with thy tranquillizing beams.

*Eighth. They were without God in the world.* They were atheists—not deniers and rejecters of God, but living without any real knowledge of him. Paul here refutes and casts back upon the heathen their own accusation against the Christians. They called the first Christians *atheists* because they rejected polytheism and confined their worship to the one immortal and self-existent Creator (Justin Mar., *Apol.* ii. 56); hence the whole force and vehemence of the popular rage fell upon the martyrs and confessors of the faith as scandalous and sacrilegious despisers of the established religion and the national gods. The Christians called the heathen *atheists* because they did not worship the one living and true God, but many imaginary and false ones who by nature were no gods (Gal. iv. 8), and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into



images (Rom. i. 23), as the papists do at present, changing the truth of God into a LIE and serving the creature more than (or along with) the Creator, who is blessed for ever (Rom. i. 25; Isa. xlv. 20; Jer. iii. 23; xiii. 25; xvi. 19). They were carried away unto dumb idols (1 Cor. xii. 2), and only at their conversion did they begin to serve the living and true God and to wait for his Son from heaven (1 Thess. i. 9). From these statements it follows that, in the Christian sense, they are *atheists* who, like the Samaritans, join idols with the true God in their worship, for the whole force of the reasoning in Rom. i. 20-30 is based on the fact that the character of the true God is known, or at least knowable, from his works; but yet, notwithstanding this, the heathen world worshiped the creature *more than* the Creator. If this constitutes *atheism*, it will not be easy to defend the Mariolatry of the Church of Rome from the heavy accusation. The words *in the world* are emphatic, and seem to say, Without God in the midst of God's world; the Worker not recognized in the midst of his works; the Creator and the creature confounded in their minds, and the glory of the incorruptible God turned into a lying vanity.

*Ninth. But ye are made nigh.* This is the turning-point of the sentence, and now we are to contemplate what they *are*. They are no longer Gentiles in the flesh, but Jews in the spirit; they are the real true circumcision not made with hands—the circumcision of the heart and spirit which God recognizes and of which he approves; they have Christ, and realize the strong words of Luther, "*Wer Christum hat, der hat alles*" ("He that has Christ has everything"). All things

are his. They are partakers of the commonwealth of the Israel of God; they share the blessings of the covenants of promise; they rejoice in hope, and their life is a walk of fellowship with God. So much may we gather from the text by way of contrast. But the apostle assures us they are no longer far off, but made nigh by the blood of the cross. Note here—

(1) Sin has made an impassable gulf between the holy God and the transgressor. Law, justice and the immutability of the Creator stand in the way to prevent communion between them. Nay, the very safety and stability of the moral universe require that the character of the Sin-Forgiver should not degenerate into that of the sin-indulger, otherwise the very foundations would be removed, and light and darkness, sin and righteousness, heaven and hell, God and Satan, be (as in the heathen world they are) inextricably blended together. If the stream of mercy flow at all, it must flow from beneath the altar of justice; if the rainbow of grace is to protect us from the deluge of wrath, it must shine through the storms of an angry sky. Hence, when the angels sinned, they were cast out of heaven (Jude 6); when Adam sinned, God left the Garden of Eden; and when the Jews became apostate, their beautiful house was left desolate. Thus the angels that fell, and the human family, and the Jews after the day of Pentecost (which they rejected), become *far off*. Sin, therefore, has erected between us and God the barrier which Jesus Christ the Mediator is here represented as removing by his death.

(2) This principle of separation, the idea of holiness and purity, was rigidly kept up in the Old Testament, and served as the basis on which right views

of the doctrine of communion with God should rest. They were his people and had the liberty of access to him; the heathen were idolaters and outcasts. The Jews were *near* and the Gentiles were *far off*; the land was Emmanuel's land, the nation his special possession: his laws guided their conduct; his temple was in the midst of them; his fatherly voice resolved their doubts (Isa. xxxiii. 22). They were a people *near to him* (Ps. cxlviii. 14; Lev. x. 3; Ps. lxxv. 4), and no other people could rejoice in having God *so near to them* (Deut. iv. 7).

Thus we have in the call of Abraham and the separation of a nation for the special work of God, with whom God could dwell, the first rudimental principles of the incarnation by which God and the race are for ever united. God was *with* the unfallen Adam, was *with* the Jewish people, is *with* the angels in heaven; but he is *become* flesh (John i. 14) and dwells *in* Christ as his chosen temple (2 Cor. v. 19). Thus the land, the people, the temple, the sacrifices, the feasts, directed the mind of the Jewish worshiper to the glories of a better dispensation.

*Tenth.* But how were they made nigh? *By the blood of Christ.* The atonement is the great FACT of the Bible, and Scripture and history alike bear witness to it.

(1) The universal practice of sacrifice points to the atonement of Christ and shows out the moral sentiment of the nations in the dark but distinct consciousness that expiation is necessary before the sinner can approach God. Their terrors, their victims, their superstitions, all point in the same direction, and even the dictum of Lucretius the mocker—that "*fear makes*

*the gods*" (*Timor facit deos*)—is based on the consciousness of guilt and the necessity of mediation.

(2) The whole Jewish economy is based upon the principle of sacrifice, and is to be looked upon as a providential preparation for the gospel in which the sacrifice of the cross holds such a conspicuous place, and both Testaments unite in declaring that without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins (Heb. ix. 22; Ex. xxiv. 8; Matt. xxvi. 28). Hence the spirit of the Old Testament is realized in the New-Testament Victim offered up upon the cross for the sin of the world. Hence the blood of Christ is presented to our faith as the vindication of Jehovah's love and the refuge in which our souls may safely wait the issues of eternity. If we have access to God, it is through the blood of the cross; there is no other name given among men by which we can be saved but the name of Jesus. (See Rom. iii. 25; v. 9; Eph. i. 17; Col. i. 14; Heb. ix. 12-14; x. 19; 1 Pet. i. 2-19; 1 John i. 7; Rev. i. 5.) In this great doctrine of atonement, which is the very same as the eternal mercy of God, the Jew and the Gentile are equally interested, and through it have an equal right, being penitent, to draw near to the presence of God. Blessed truth! Let us come! Let us all come! Why stay afar off, when the way is open and the King invites? Draw near to God! The cross is the *way*, the Crucified is the *Mediator*, the salvation of our souls is the *end*. Then come, brother, for the time is short, and temptations are strong, and the force of habit increases daily, and the command of God is, "*To-day, if ye will hear his voice;*" "*Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.*"

*Eleventh. He is our peace* (ver. 14). *Peace* is here put for "peace-maker," and presents Jesus to our minds and hearts as the Prince of peace—the *Sar-shalom* of Isa. ix. We were enemies of God by wicked works, but he has reconciled us; we, Jews and Gentiles, hated one another with moral antipathy, but he has made us one body, one temple of God in the Spirit (Eph. iii. 6); our conscience was disquieted, and he has given us peace with God. Thus we owe to him a threefold peace—peace within, peace with our brethren of mankind and peace with heaven. He is our peace. His name is the Prince of peace; his birth is the song of peace; his gospel is the kingdom of peace; in his life on earth he came and preached peace; his death on the cross was the seal of peace; and the last blessing he bequeathed from Mount Olivet was the blessing of peace. Now the veil of the temple is rent and the middle wall of partition taken down; no nation, as such, has any special claim to be the people of God, and no impediment stands in the way of the sinner's approach to God. This is the value of the cross, this is its inestimable worth in the sight of God—that the greatest, vilest sinner on earth is as free to approach God *through the blood* of Christ as are the unfallen angels before the throne. The unfallen draw near without a mediator, the sinner approaches in the way of mediation, and both are accepted by God. If the sinner is condemned, he is self-condemned; no barrier save unbelief stands between him and God, and every hour he remains *unbelieving* only adds to his guilt. My brother, this is indeed a serious matter. Is Jesus Christ your peace? Can you enter eternity with the sure conviction, "He is

my peace ;” I see in God my Father, and in heaven my home?

*Twelfth.* The same subject is continued in verses 15, 16 and 17, but it assumes a somewhat different form, which may conveniently be called *The one new man in Christ Jesus*. Let us ask, then, first, What is the enmity which he has abolished? As peace is taken for the cause of peace, so here enmity is put for the cause or occasion of enmity, and this, the apostle says, was the law of commandments contained in *ordinances*. These ordinances are called *dogmas* because they were *positive* prescriptions, not founded on necessity or the nature of things, but on the will of the author, and consequently liable to be changed at his pleasure. Hence the edicts of princes are *dogmas* (Luke ii. 1; Acts xvii. 7); the decrees of the apostles concerning the eating of blood and things strangled are called *dogmas* (Acts xvi. 4); and submitting to the yoke of arbitrary human ordinances is called *dogmatizing* (Col. ii. 20). These are the carnal ordinances imposed upon the Jews till the time of reformation (Heb. ix. 10), and these form the cause of the implacable enmity between them and the Gentile world. The Persians considered the Jews as a strange race whose laws were diverse from those of all other people, and neither did they keep the king’s laws (Esth. iii. 8). What the Romans thought of them we may learn from Tacitus, *Hist.* v. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, of which the following is a brief synopsis :

“The origin of the Jewish nation is unknown. Some think them originally Cretans, and name them Idaeans or Judæans from Mount Ida; others make them a colony of Egyptians, led out by Hierosolymus

and Juda; some deem them Assyrians, and others derive them from the ancient Solymans of Homer, and thus account for the name of their chief city, Hierosolyma or Jerusalem. One thing, however, is certain—that the gods plagued the miserable race with all kinds of loathsome diseases until they were finally banished out of Egypt, when Moses, in their despair, encouraged the sinking multitude, and after seven days' journey they took possession of the country where they built their city. Moses gave them laws contrary to all mortals; so that whatever the Romans held sacred they held profane. They worship the ass in their temple; they despise Jupiter Ammon; they rest the seventh day, and every seventh year is devoted to sluggish inactivity; their rites are vile and abominable, and their very depravity is made a source of glory and emolument; so that the scum and refuse of the nations flock to Jerusalem and enrich the state with gifts and offerings. The Jews are obstinate, inflexible and uncharitable; they circumcise their children, despise the gods, have no intercourse with strangers, are lascivious and profligate among themselves, never kill their children, despise death, believe in a future state, and, neglecting the worship of the nations, acknowledge one God only, whom they contemplate with the mind's eye as the great governing Mind that directs and guides the whole frame of nature, eternal, infinite and neither capable of change nor subject to decay." Such is the testimony of Tacitus. The Jews, on their part, contemplated the Gentiles as outcasts and idolaters, with whom they were to have no intercourse (Acts x. 28). There was, indeed, a fierce mortal *enmity* between them, and Jesus removed

the cause of this by abolishing the exclusive and temporary ordinances of the Jews. He was to make an end of sin and sacrificial offerings (Dan. ix. 24) ; hence his death ended the shadowy ritual and brought in the dispensation of liberty and life.

But how has he abolished the enmity? Answer: *In his flesh.* *In* here, and in many other places, has, in both Greek and English, the same signification as *through* (Col. i. 16; Matt. vi. 7; 1 Cor. xv. 18; Rom. iii. 25; 2 Tim. ii. 9). The meaning is clearly this: By means of the flesh, through the assumption of human nature, he has slain the enmity and reconciled the Jew and the Gentile in one body, the Church, which is the habitation of God in the Spirit. Some refer the words *in his flesh* to the incarnation (1 John iv. 2, 3; Rom. ix. 5; i. 3); others, to the crucifixion (Col. i. 22; 1 Pet. iii. 18). Nor is there anything to hinder either application; indeed, the latter seems to have been in the mind of the apostle (ver. 16), but in itself the word *flesh*, or *in the flesh*, denotes simply his *humanity*. The doctrine then is this: The Lord Jesus, the Son of God, has abolished the enmity between Jew and Gentile by removing its cause, which is the Jewish ritual; and this he has done through the human nature which he assumed, in which we see the perfect holiness which the law commanded, the vindication of violated justice to which all the offerings pointed, and the resurrection of the body and eternal life which formed the hope of mankind from the beginning of the world. We see here, as everywhere in Scripture, the value of the *human nature of Christ* in the system of faith. It is in him what God intended it to be; the plan and purpose of God is



realized and completed in him; and human nature, such as we have it, such as it is found among the nations, with all its wants and weaknesses and affections—(sin only excepted, Heb. iv. 15; vii. 26), has been made the instrument of revealing Jehovah's love to us and lifting us up into fellowship with himself. Oh, wondrous act of love and grace! Who shall measure his descent? Who shall conceive the height of our elevation? The Son of God is in *our flesh*—is invested with our humanity that we might for ever be with Christ *in God* (Col. iii. 3). Was there ever such a change? Oh, never, never, never! No love, Lord Jesus, like thine! no name, no peace, no glory, no grace, like thine! May light please the eye and music the ear and friendship the heart no more the day I cease to prize thee above all earthly things!

Observe the end of this abolishing of the enmity—viz., that he might create the two into one new man in himself, so making peace. The two mentioned here are the Jews and the Gentiles; they are united in him, in his person, through his means, under him as the universal Head, and formed into a *new man*—one living vine, one spiritual house, one glorious temple—for the praise and worship of almighty God. A *new Man*—the Head, the Redeemer, the God-Man, a new thing in the earth. The members are renewed by the Holy Ghost; there is a new heart, a new name, a new nature; new hopes fill them, new powers sustain them. Their city is the New Jerusalem; they expect a new earth under them, a new heaven above them, a new and immortal life within them. All things are become new. Both are reconciled to God in one body by the cross, and the door of divine mercy is opened to the whole

human race. This is the substance also of the seventeenth verse: not personally, indeed, but by the apostles, he preached peace to them that were far off and them that were nigh. Moses is now unveiled, and a greater than Moses unfolds to all men the mild lineaments of universal love.

*Thirteenth.* We come now to the eighteenth verse, which tells of *our access to God* and contains a short notice of the Holy Trinity and the relations of the divine Persons to the worshipers. The following are the chief points for the expositor:

(1) *We both have access to the Father.* The Father is the Person to whom we come as the proper rest and home of the prodigal. He is the great King to whose presence we are introduced, and his position is upon the throne. The conversion of the soul by grace, the ordinances of the gospel in general and the various operations of the Son and Spirit are all intended to bring us *to him*. He is called *Father* in reference to Jesus Christ because of the relation which subsisted, before the world was, between the Father and the Son; or, as Athanasius expresses it, "The Son is of the Father, without beginning and eternally begotten." This relation of Father and Son in the Godhead is the glory of our family system on earth and gives force and significancy to a multitude of Scripture passages. *First.* The absolute way in which he is called the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ precludes the possibility of a mere figurative sonship, and hence he is called *God the Father* (1 Cor. viii. 6). It is said emphatically that the *Father loveth the Son* (John iii. 35); no man knoweth the *Son* but the Father. These and all similar expressions seem utterly inconsistent with an unreal figurative sonship. *Second.*

The phrase *Son of God* in the New Testament denotes deity. This necessarily follows, indeed, from the nature of the case, if the sonship be a reality, for sonship is based on a community of nature between the Father and the Son. Adam begat a son in his image; the father was limited, mortal, sinful, had a beginning, and Cain was like his father in all these respects; but, had the son been boundless, immortal, holy and eternal, he would not have been in the image and likeness of his father. Even so, if God, who is without a beginning, had a son who had a beginning, it would be as unnatural as if Adam, who had a beginning, had a son without a beginning. The son of a boundless, glorious, immortal and eternal being must, if he resemble his father, possess these attributes. This the Jews understood well and acted upon; for they took up stones to stone him because he made himself the Son of God, and he was finally condemned and executed because he confessed that he was the Son of the *blessed God* (Matt. xxvi. 63; Mark xiv. 61). Add to this that he is emphatically called the Son, the beloved Son, the only begotten Son, who alone knows and reveals the Father (John i. 14, 18; iii. 16, 18; 1 John iv. 9). He is the First-Begotten and Heir of the creation, by whom the universe was created and is sustained (Col. i. 15, 16, 17). He is the Son before incarnation (Ps. xlv. 6, 7; Heb. i. 6). He was not sent to *become a son*, but the only-begotten of the Father was sent to *become a servant* (Phil. ii. 7), and the great love of the Father consists in the giving up of his well-beloved Son.

(2) Our access to the Father is *through him*—that is, the Mediator. *Through* is the proper word for mediation, and shows forth the person and the work of the

Saviour. This is God's appointed way of access to himself. *In Christ we come; through Christ we come; in the name of Christ we come; for Christ's sake we ask the Father to accept and bless us.* These are various modes of expression, but they all denote mediation and are peculiar to the Son. Our prayers and our praises ascend *to the Father through the Son and by the one Spirit who originates and directs them.* The position of the Father is the throne; the Son, as Mediator, stands before the throne or at the right hand of God; the Holy Spirit dwells in the Church as his temple, and by him all good desires and heavenly aspirations are generated. In the same way, every good gift comes *from the Father through the Son, and is brought into the life and experience of the believer by the Holy Ghost.* Thus the Spirit works *in us, the Son for us, and the Father is the end and object of all working whatsoever.* The Father's love is the *p̄gē* or fountain-head of fullness for the needy creation, and through the Son, the Mediator, this fullness flows forth in streams of blessing in every direction; while the Holy Ghost, the Comforter and Quickener, prepares the soil for the seed and fructifies the vineyard with the streams of refreshing that make glad the city of God. This is indeed grace! This is the means of grace! The Church of Jesus is surrounded with all kinds of heavenly influences. She moves in one perpetual circle of manifold, ever-varying, all-comprehending love, whose centre, circumference and fullness is God the Father, from whom all proceeds and to whom all returns; the Son the Mediator, the God-Man on earth and the Man-God in heaven, through whom the Godhead condescends to bless; and the Holy Spirit the Indweller, who

consecrates the temple and awakens and sustains the fervor of the worshipers. This glorious God is ours, this God of boundless love. You live, move and breathe in him, brother; and though, like the prodigal, you may have been in the far country, he seeks to give you the name and the place and the honors of a son. Do you know him? He is your Father. Approach, and you will find him love!

*Fourteenth. The holy temple.* This is the substance of verses 19-22. This fine figure and other similar ones are the basis of the idea which Augustine incorporated in the name of his most profound and popular work *The City of God*. The words "strangers" and "foreigners" are opposed to "fellow-citizens" and "household," and refer to what they were in the state of nature. They were strangers and foreigners, but they are so no more. They are now denizens of the Holy City and members of the family of God. The partition-wall is taken down, the distinction between "the people" and "the Gentiles," so far as it refers to religious privileges, is removed, and all believers are fellow-citizens in the heavenly *polity* or New-Jerusalem citizenship (Phil. iii. 20), of which Canaan, Jerusalem and the whole Jewish economy were but the types. *City* and *house* are the great ideas of the passage, and they show the twofold relations of the Church to God. Grace has made us a *nation*, a holy *city*, whose God is the Lord, whose only king and ruler is Jehovah. We are fellow-citizens with the saints in light, but this relation, however honorable, is external and national, the relation between a city and its king, and hence he adds the name "*household of God*." Ye are not only his people, but his fam-

ily; ye not only dwell in his city, but ye live in his house. He is your God as the chosen people, and your Father as the redeemed family. The *God* of Abraham is the *God* and *Father* of our Lord Jesus Christ, and hence Jews were the servants and Christians are the sons of God (Heb. iii. 1-7), and Jew and Gentile are swallowed up in the name *believer*.

(2) Consider further your privileges in this passage, and stand fast for the rights which God has given you. Ye are built upon the foundation of *apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief corner-stone*. Apostles are put before prophets because the office is more honorable—not because they are first in order of time, but first in order of rank and dignity. The apostles of the New and the prophets of the Old Testament are the foundations of the living temple of God. They are the authorized and commissioned teachers of mankind, by whom the will of God in things pertaining to salvation has been made known to the world. All that we really know of God and the divine character we owe to them. Without revelation no nation ever attained to the belief even of the divine unity, much less to that of the Trinity, mediation, redemption, final judgment and everlasting life. They would be wise men and philosophers in our times who presume to slight the apostles and the prophets, and yet but for them they would still have been sacrificing to even a less reputable god than Mercury. The foundation-stone bears the weight of the temple, the corner-stone unites its various parts and the top-stone completes it. Jesus is related to his Church in various ways, and every name and office only serves to bring to view more of his fullness. The apostles and proph-

ets are the external visible foundations ; he is the real, invisible, immovable Foundation (1 Cor. iii. 11), the Rock of ages on whom alone the hopes of the fallen race can rest. His person is the centre of all relations, near or remote, by which the Church and the creation are brought into various degrees of fellowship with God. As the Son of God he is the foundation, upbearing and sustaining the whole building ; as God-Man, Mediator, he is the chief corner-stone, which unites the different parts ; and as the Son of man, the highest and head of the worshipers, he is the top-stone, which completes and consolidates the whole temple of God.

This, then, is the idea of a Church. It is a congregation of faithful men, a number of believers associated in the ordinances of the gospel, growing together into a holy temple in the Lord. God dwells in them as his house ; is seen, manifested and worshiped in them as his temple ; makes over to them, as his family, all the divine promises ; and finally glorifies them in his heavenly kingdom. These are the elect, chosen before the foundation of the world ; the redeemed, the called, the faithful servants who hide not their talents in the earth ; the branches of the vine, the trees of his planting, the members of his household, the stones of his temple, the heirs of his purchased possession, the witnesses of his grace and the expectants of his glory.

My brother, are you a stone in this temple ? Are you so fitted into some place that the strength of the building is yours, to enable you to resist the storms ? Then walk in love as Christ also hath loved you and given himself an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor (Eph. v. 2). Do not forget where your treasure is, even in heaven, and there let your heart be also.

## CHAPTER VI.

For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: how that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery (as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ); which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ; to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.—EPHESIANS iii. 1-10.

WE have now surveyed the proportions of the heavenly temple where God dwells, composed alike of Jews and of Gentiles whom the Spirit of life has quickened by faith and drawn together by one common hope. This is my doctrine, and for this purpose I am called (says Paul), even to proclaim to the Gentiles the grace and compassion of God, that they, as well as the Jews, may be incorporated into the body of Christ, built up into the one Temple and engrafted into the one living, life-giving Vine. There is no difference any more: the veil is removed, the partition-



wall is broken down, and in the whole world the stream of Jehovah's love finds no impediment save unbelief, which shuts against it the human heart. The time is come for forming a new community, which, rising out of the ruins of all former kingdoms, and pervaded with new and immortal principles, shall open the gates of righteousness to all nations and shall people the heavenly paradise with saints and heroes and martyrs from regions now filled with idolatry and spiritual death. I announce to all sinners a Saviour; to all outcasts from God and righteousness, a home; and to all prodigals, a welcoming Father. I am the apostle of the Gentiles, specially commissioned from God to break down all national distinctions and publish the free and full mercy of God to all mankind. This is the cause of the Jewish wrath which pursues me to the uttermost and seems to be satisfied with nothing less than my death. Hence—

*First. My imprisonment* (ver. 1). I am for this very reason a prisoner of Christ. I follow the ancient commentators in supplying the words "I am," as being the simplest way of completing the sense. I preach equal privileges for Jews and Gentiles, and therefore I am now a prisoner. If we connect "for this cause," in verse 1, with the same phrase in verse 14, making all between a parenthesis, we have a very different meaning, and supply the ellipsis thus: For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ, *bow my knees* for the sake of you Gentiles, etc. In this latter case the passage is much weakened as a proof of his love. "I am in prison, and even in prison I pray for you," is, indeed, kind and brotherly, but not such an evidence of love as "I preach the love of God to you Gentiles,

and therefore I am in bonds." The proof of my love to you Gentiles is my prison, not my prayers. For you I braved the fury of the people (Acts xxii. 22; xxv. 11, 12; xxvi. 17); for you I had to appeal unto Cæsar, and for your sake I am now in the prisons of Rome. It was the love of Christ, indeed, which constrained me (2 Cor. v. 14) to testify his grace to those for whom he died. This is indeed the law of the Church founded on grace, and in another sense the law of the race founded on nature and the unity of mankind.

The Socinian cavil against the atonement is best met here. Is it right that one man should suffer for another? We answer, It is the law of the race, and you can no more get rid of it than you can get rid of growth or pain or death. We were created in Adam; we fell in Adam; we were saved in Noah; the curse on Ishmael and Canaan descended and still rests upon their descendants (Gen. xxi. 9, 10; ix. 25); the Jews are dispersed through the world for their fathers' sins; the child comes weeping and shivering into conditions which it did not choose and could not avoid; the friend suffers for the friend, the father for the son, the son for the father. The pilot leads us upon the rock, and we all perish; the father wastes and the son starves; the tyrant brings evil upon a whole nation; the patriot, blessing. All these show plainly enough that the Lord deals with us in the way of headship, and that for blessing or for cursing he treats *the many in the one*. Atonement is no strange thing in the world; the atonement of Jesus Christ is, indeed, the wonder and joy of the universe, but the principles on which it rests are as old as is the world itself. Hence Paul's

being a prisoner for the sake of the Gentiles is as just a ground for the Socinian objection already mentioned as that Christ died for the ungodly (Rom. v. 6.) (Comp. Rom. ix. 3; xiv. 15; 2 Cor. v. 14, 15; Rom. viii. 32.)

Christ's sufferings were indeed expiatory, because he was the Son of God, having power to lay down his life and power to take it up again. In this he stands alone; but, in so far as he was the righteous One contending against the ungodliness of man, he was only the suffering Head of the martyred Church, whose highest glory is to be persecuted for righteousness' sake.

*Second.* The second verse announces the *dispensation* of grace—"if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God"—on which we have the following observations to make.

*If* here might very well be read "since," as in Col. i. 23; Gal. iii. 4; 2 Cor. v. 2, where the thing spoken of is not doubtful, but taken for granted. The connection is this: "You know, then, dear brethren, that I am the Lord's prisoner for your sake, since, or forasmuch as, you know the cause of it in my miraculous conversion and my being called to the apostolic office. For your sakes, too, I have received this *grace of God*, that I should be the *econome* or steward of the heavenly house." Here it is the *grace*, in Col. i. 25 it is the *dispensation*, which is given; and the meaning is nearly the same. The office and the qualification are both from God. What is this economy or dispensation? It is the "law of the house," the principle and mode of housekeeping—the "*Haushaltung Gottes*," according to the Germans. The idea is beautiful. The

house, the household, the father, the family, are the holiest things on earth. There all sorts of varieties and diversities meet in unity—rule and obedience, rewards and punishments, hopes and fears. There are varieties of ages, sexes, characters, conditions, temperaments, etc., and the scheme of disciplining and ruling the whole is economy, the house-law or dispensation, and the person to whom this is committed is the economist of the house, as was Joseph (Gen. xxxix. 4), or the heir, as was Eliezer (Gen. xv. 2; xxiv. 2). Hence it is easily applied to civil offices (1 Cor. iv. 2; Rom. xvi. 23) and to the ministers of religion (1 Cor. iv. 1; Tit. i. 7; 1 Pet. iv. 10). Let us now apply these principles to the passages in which it occurs in a religious sense.

(1) Our text (Eph. iii. 2) assures us that the apostolic office is a dispensation of the grace of God for the Gentile world. Keep the idea of the household law before the mind, and the exposition will become easy and natural, thus: "Ye have heard that God is forming his house, his living temple; and the law of the heavenly architecture is that Jews and Gentiles, rich and poor, good and bad, should be built up and cemented together by faith and love under one Head, Jesus Christ. This I am commissioned to proclaim to the world, and this is the dispensation of grace which is given me for your sakes." The house is one; one Father, one Elder Brother, one family, law, faith, to the exclusion of all national or ceremonial distinction.

(2) *The dispensation of the fullness of the times* (Eph. i. 10) reveals the purpose of Jehovah in the Christ, and carries the mind upward and onward to the perfected happiness of the creation and the re-

vealed glory of God. This housekeeping, the scheme of paternal government under which the Lord is bringing the Church, extends to all nations, generations and ages, and is to embrace, under the great Steward of God, all earthly and heavenly things. The seeds are now being deposited which shall ripen into a harvest of glory; grace, love, faith, suffering, self-denial, and all the fruits of the Spirit, are but the initiatory processes in the household economy of God, which is to unite and establish for ever in one glorious, unchangeable union the Creator and the creation, the unfallen and the redeemed, the visible and the invisible, the material and the immaterial worlds. This is a great economy, a glorious family law, which, like the law of nature, but still more enduring, embraces all varieties and extremes and gives beauty and consistency to the operations of God in all nations and ages. Does not the heart leap and the eye sparkle when we think of this immortal hope? We are parts of this system; we are members of this family; we find our place in the economy of God.

(3) In 1 Tim. i. 4 we have the remarkable expression *The dispensation of God, which is by faith*. Luther, our translators and others, following the Vulgate, must have read *oikodomia* instead of *oikonomia*, or, as there is the difference of but one letter, they may have mistaken the one for the other. Hence we have *edification* instead of "dispensation" in the English text, which makes, indeed, good sense, but is without authority and to be rejected. The contrast is between the fables, genealogies and endless questions of the Jewish rabbis and the divine *scheme of salvation by faith*. Wean men's minds away from foolish speculations concerning ritualism,

succession and outward formalities; let higher objects occupy your attention: God has unfolded the plan of salvation by faith, and this, for you and for all, is the one thing needful. Here superstition is contrasted with faith, formalism with Christianity; priests and priestly dresses, holy times, places and garments, with all the foolish questions to which they give rise, are gone for ever. The time of a nobler dispensation is come, in which God has become the householder, his Son the steward, his Spirit the indwelling life of the family, and *faith* the law which gathers and binds them together. Not the Church, but Christ; not the "do-and-live" system, but the economy of God, which is by faith.

*Third.* We have in the third verse a reference to the conversion of the apostle, to which we now turn your attention for a little while: "*If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: how that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery*" (ver. 2, 3). I take the word *revelation* as designating the visible appearance of Jesus Christ near Damascus, and all the future progressive manifestations of divine truth in the soul of the apostle. The visible glory was probably the commencement of the work of grace, the starting-point to which all future revelations are to be traced. In this sense I understand Gal. i. 16: "It pleased God to *reveal his Son in me*, that I might preach him among the heathen." The outward preceded the inward revelation, or perhaps they took place at the same moment of time. The natural eye and the spiritual were both enlightened by the same celestial glory. It is manifest that *revelation*, as applied to Christ in the New Testament, does not mean his

communicating the knowledge of God, but the unveiling of his own person. Hence it is often applied to his second coming (1 Cor. i. 7; 2 Thess. i. 7; 1 Pet. i. 7; iv. 13; Rev. i. 1) as the unveiling of his glory and majesty before the nations of the earth. He is now within the veil, but, like the high priest of old, he is coming forth from the holiest of all to bless the people. This is the order of the divine procedure—first the natural, and then the spiritual; first the visible, and then the invisible. Hence the first man is of the earth earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. The old creation precedes the new; the Jewish economy, the Christian; the incarnation, the advent of the Holy Spirit.

But why did God thus reveal his Son to Paul? Answer: The visible glorious appearance of Christ to the murderer near Damascus (Acts ix. 3, etc.) shows not only the ineffable compassion of God, but is at the same time one of the most striking testimonies to the truth of Christianity. That one *fact* proves the death, resurrection and glorification of Christ, and it annihilates gnosticism, pantheism and an impersonal, ideal mediator. Paul repeatedly refers to it (Acts xxii. 6, etc.). All the labors of his life, as all his sufferings for Christ's sake, are based upon the irreversible conviction that Jesus the Redeemer met him and spake with him at Damascus. Besides, Paul was the apostle of the Gentiles, and, as Mede has well proved, was the fit type of what Sir Isaac Newton calls the second apostleship, when the Jews shall become the heralds of the cross and the missionaries of the world (Isa. lxvi. 19). Paul was converted by the personal appearing of Christ, and then sent to enlighten the Gentiles; so the whole Jew-

ish nation will be converted at the second coming of Christ (Rom. xi. 26), and then made the means of life and benediction to all the nations of the world (Rom. xi. 15). Therefore the Jews exist still; their sins have not been able to break the chain of love which holds them together for some great purpose in the latter day. Hence they are ever dying, but cannot die; ever persecuted, scattered, dispersed, hated, like the salamander they emerge out of the fires, as full of hatred and of proud defiance as before. They reject the mystery which God revealed to their kinsman Paul—that Jews and Gentiles should constitute the same body and be partakers of the same promises in Christ by the gospel (Eph. iii. 3-6). The purpose must be great and strong which thus, contrary to all human reason and experience, preserves them a distinct and separate people.

But observe what we owe to the conversion of Paul, to the appearance of Christ at Damascus, and learn how the results illustrate and justify the miraculous event.

(1) In the life and labors of Paul we have one main proof of the truth of Christianity. Is it credible that Paul could leave all that is dearest to men in this world, suffer for the name of Christ beyond human endurance, and finally die the martyr's death for the sake of the Son of God? It is credible only on the supposition that *Jesus Christ met him*—that is, that Christianity is true. We have not so strong evidence that Alexander passed the Granicus, or that Wellington died at Walmer Castle, or that Napoleon met the czar of Russia on the raft at Tilsit, as that Jesus Christ appeared to Paul at Damascus. If the life, labors and death of Paul do



not prove the *reality* of his conversion by Jesus Christ, human evidence *can* prove nothing.

(2) To the event we owe his fourteen Epistles. These are the noblest treasures of the Christian Church, and (inspiration apart) for beauty, sublimity and truth surpass immeasurably all the monuments of the Greeks and the Romans. They are as different from any fourteen letters of Cicero as is the sun from a Roman lighthouse. We meet God in them; the sky is bright and serene, and the air always breathes of heaven. No earthly music fills the full-orbed heart from which the notes fall into the sinner's ear. I add—

(3) The apostle Paul has influenced the world more than any other man that ever existed, except the Son of man himself, Jesus Christ our Lord. He practically opened the kingdom of heaven to the Gentiles; the whole Church is mainly built upon the foundations which he laid, and interpenetrated with the doctrines which he taught. Lay all these together, and you will see the importance of Christ's appearance on the way to Damascus.

But we come now to the fourth, fifth and sixth verses, which give us—

*Fourth. The mystery of Christ.* *Mystery*, in the New Testament, does not mean something which we are bound to conceal, but, on the contrary, something which we are bound to make known. The mysteries of the gospel are in no respect the counterpart of the ancient heathen mysteries. It has, indeed, never yet been proved that the unity of God, the perfection of his nature and the doctrine of a future life with him were contained in these impure rites; and even if they were, they could be of little use to mankind, seeing the

initiated were bound by the most fearful oaths not to divulge them. The mysteries of the gospel are the great truths of Christianity, hitherto imperfectly known or altogether unknown, but now revealed by the Saviour and his apostles, and by the commandment of the everlasting God to be made known unto all nations for the obedience of faith. (Comp. 1 Cor. xiii. 2; xiv. 2; xv. 51.) We are not to conceal, but to make known, the doctrines of the gospel; we are saved by *faith*, not by the incantation of priestly performers; and hence we preach the atonement *without reserve* and proclaim universally the justifying righteousness of the Redeemer.

(1) The *mystery of Christ* seems to refer primarily to his person as the God-Man, in whom all the fullness of the Godhead substantially dwells (Col. ii. 9); hence it is written, "Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory" (1 Tim. iii. 16). This wonderful mystery of godliness is no longer hidden, but revealed in the incarnation of the Son of God; the sea of divine grace and love has burst over its ancient bounds, and purifying streams from the smitten rock flow freely and for ever into all thirsty hearts. It is a mystery—not because it should be concealed, not because it cannot be known, but because its depth and height, its length and breadth of boundless, bottomless, immeasurable love to man, surpass all human understanding. The Word was made flesh. The living and the dead, the immortal and the mortal, met in his person. The glories of the incorruptible Godhead were united to the weaknesses and the wants of our

nature; so that power divine is brought to our help against the enemy and all the attributes of Deity are engaged in our defence. How was this union effected? By the power of the Holy Ghost. This I know, and I seek to know no more. Nor is the doctrine of the incarnation peculiar in this respect. Nature is just as mysterious as grace. We know as much of the person of God the Son, the Redeemer of the world, as of God the Father, the Creator of the world. The new creation is not more mysterious than the old, resurrection than death, the doctrine of the Trinity than the existence of sin in the dominions of God. In fact, we know the *modes* of nothing, and should mainly seek to make ourselves acquainted with the great *realities* which lie before us in the kingdoms of nature and of grace.

(2) Arising out of the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh, is the mystery of the *New-Testament Church* to which the apostle specially refers in our text (Eph. iii. 3-6). The Head is one with God, and we are one with the Head. The hypostatical union is the basis of the mystical union. The Head and the members of the body personal and of the body mystical must pass through the same varieties of condition and be filled with the same mysterious principles. He is indeed the God-Man, which no other can be—God with us on earth, and man with God in heaven. But the believer is chosen in him, crucified with him, buried with him in the grave, quickened with him in the resurrection and seated with him in the heavenly places. All this is mystery, but it is the mystery of grace and love. Love unites; sin separates. God and man united, Jews and Gentiles united, the

Church and the Church's Head united, the heavens and the earth united (Eph. i. 10), in one centre of unity, Jesus Christ the Mediator,—this is the work of love, the mystery of the incarnate God working in the Head and the members, and preaching glory to God in the highest and on earth peace and good-will to man.

(3) From this union between believers and Christ arises another mystery, which is “Christ in you the hope of glory” (Col. i. 27). This is the gospel mystery of *sanctification*, on which Marschale has written so well. This is the end of the other two, so far as this world is concerned, for the incarnation and the Headship of Christ are only the appointed means for vindicating the righteousness of God and communicating to believers the gifts of the Holy Ghost. The union between the two natures in Christ was formed by the Spirit (Luke i. 35), and the union between the Head and the members is formed and kept up by the same Spirit. He was generated and we are regenerated by the same Spirit; he received the Holy Ghost in baptism, and so do we; after the resurrection he received the Spirit in a fuller and more glorious manner (Acts ii. 33; Ps. lxviii. 18), and we expect also the fullness of all spiritual blessings in the resurrection of the just. This is sanctification—“Christ in you the hope of glory;” Christ filling you with his Spirit and forming a living temple for God to dwell in; the vessels of his mercy, the trees of his planting, the bearers of his cross and the heirs of his glory.

Gather now into one these three magnificent and all-comprehending truths—Jesus the incarnate God, Jesus the living Head and Jesus dwelling in the

Church by his Spirit, the hope of glory—and you may form some feeble conception of the mystery of Christ of which the apostle boasts that he knows so much (Eph. iii. 4), hidden, indeed, in other ages, but now revealed unto the holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.

*Fifth.* But let us contemplate for a moment the *Gentile Church* in verse 6: “*That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.*” We do not mean here to imitate those who, like Palmer and his cosuperstitionists, idolize antiquity and church traditions. The place for such men is Rome or Jerusalem, where they can surround themselves with ecclesiastical fables, miracles and traditions like a spider’s web. The New-Testament Church and the Bible Christian require no such helps. The noble simplicity of the Church, as seen in the records of the apostolic ages, is to the Christian heart more attractive than the false glare of a pompous ritual and a worldly hierarchy. We observe, then—

(1) That the Gentiles are to share the inheritance of the Jews; they are to be *fellow-heirs*. The Jews remain in their ancient privileges, and the Gentiles are to be grafted in among them. Salvation is of the Jews. The root that bears up the branches is the Jew (Rom. xi. 18); and if some of the branches have fallen through unbelief, the privileges and the prospects of the nation remain still to the remnant, according to the election of grace (Rom. xi. 5). But what were the Jewish privileges? Paul observes (Rom. ix. 4, 5): “To them pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the ser-

vice of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever." These glories we share, and in the act of believing on the Son of God become entitled to them all. We are made the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus (Gal. iii. 26). "The glory" is the Shekinah, the symbol of God's glorious presence, which resided in the family of Seth till the Flood, and afterward appeared occasionally to Moses, Joshua, Samuel and others, until finally it dwelt among the children of Israel from the erection of the tabernacle to the destruction of the temple, taking up its abode over the ark of the covenant and called by the Septuagint "the glory of the Lord."\*

All this was, no doubt, a picture or type of Him who is the true tabernacle (John i. 14, Greek) of the wilderness and the temple of the Promised Land. We have this glory still more than the Jews, for we have the presence of the Comforter to abide with us for ever. Thus all the ancient Jewish blessings have become ours, and remain ours for ever on the single condition of faith. He that believeth on the Son hath life. Thus the Christian system is the development of principles which lay hidden in Judaism. Moses unveiled is Christ, and the Old and the New Testament can be no more separated than can the body and the spirit in a living man.

We occupy a higher position than did the Jews; we are farther on in the journey, and have around us a much wider prospect. Their national hopes were mainly earthly, and ours are mainly heavenly. They were a nation of servants under Moses, the faithful servant

\* Bloomfield.

of God, and we are sons under the Headship of Jesus, the Son of God (Heb. iii. 5, 6). The law which gendereth to bondage united them; the spirit of love and liberty is our bond of union. Jehovah was their God; he is our Father. The Church is founded on the person of *the risen Christ*, united with him as the Conqueror at the right hand of God and filled with the powers and hopes of immortality. We see sin, holiness and truth with his eyes; we contemplate the earth from the position of his glory in heaven (Eph. ii. 6). His Spirit transfuses and fills all hearts, and lifts us up into fellowship with God. God was with the Jews, and this was their glory; God was *in Christ*, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing to men their trespasses, and this is our glory. Heavenly-mindedness, union with the Son of God by faith, the hope of his coming and kingdom, of being with him and like him in his glory, of reigning with him after we have suffered with him,—these are the heavenly things which we are entreated to seek, which distinguish the religion of Christ from all others and gild the redeemed Church, even in the midst of much earthliness and corruption, with hues of celestial beauty.

(2) *Jews and Gentiles are of the same body*, and, as believers on the Son of God, stand on the same level. This does not annihilate the national distinctions between Israel and the Gentiles, for of the distinctions and their results in future ages the Scriptures are full. Israel shall be restored and converted and highly honored among, if not above, the nations of the earth. But now there is no nationality in the Church of God: succession, descent, circumcision in the flesh and all such worldly bonds are relaxed in the seal of

faith—in the union of the believing soul with God in Christ. It is no longer life flowing through a *nation*, but life flowing in a *body*, its free and natural organ.

Observe that the Head of this body is the God-Man, Jesus Christ the Mediator (Eph. v. 23; 1 Cor. xi. 3; Eph. i. 22; iv. 15; v. 23; Col. i. 18; ii. 10, 19). These passages sufficiently demonstrate that Jesus is the Head of the Church, that he is the only Head of the Church, and that one of the blasphemies of Antichrist is that he claims to be the head of the Church and to sit in the temple of God (2 Thess. ii. 4). But, leaving this blasphemer to settle his account with God, let us consider the functions of the Head. First, then, we receive *nourishment* by the Head; so the whole Church lives and increases by the heavenly manna ministered according to her need by the glorified Head in heaven. Her wants are all supplied from the living fount of glory in the heavens, from which she drinks, in the person of her Head, the streams of refreshing that make glad the city of God. Secondly, all *utterance* is through the Head. The wants of the members of the body can be made known only through the head; so our wants are made known through Jesus, the Redeemer and spiritual Head. We have no other way of getting the ear of God but through the mouth of Christ, no other name but his in which we can approach God. He is the way, the truth and the life, and the one Mediator between God and men. There is a close *union* between the head and the members. So it is with the Church and her risen Head; there is a union—not visible, indeed, but real and vital—between Christ and all believers. He was not, and is not, the private, but the public, Man, the official



Christ, who in our name and nature died for our sins, rose for our justification and now intercedes for us in heaven. He is at the right hand of God in our nature; pure, glorious and immortalized, our frail and corruptible humanity shines forth in him with more than its pristine excellence and beauty. He is our Brother and Head—our glorified Brother and immortalized Head; his strength, victory and glory are all ours—all made ours by faith, which unites us to him as the Redeemer and Head of the body which is the Church, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all.

The *body*, as a name or symbol of the Church, is very striking and significant. He is the Head, and they are the members; so that, taken together, they make up the colossal man, the anointed mystical Christ. They are united to God and Christ and one another by the indwelling of the one Spirit, the Quickener and Comforter. There are in this body all varieties of fortune and condition, of tribes, languages and colors, in all stages of civilization and mental culture; some of them are triumphant above, others are fighting the good fight of faith here below; there are children, young men and fathers; there are infinite varieties of trials and temptations, fightings and fears, mountains of difficulty and valleys of humiliation, yet there is a strong hidden life pervading them all and moulding them all into the one perfect and glorious image in which the beauty and majesty of our nature is to be consummated for ever. They keep gazing upon him, and are changed into the same image from glory to glory. They are one with Him who loved them in faith and hope and charity. They have the same enemies, the same friends, the

same hopes and fears. A secret sympathy pervades them all like an electric fluid—the love of Christ (2 Cor. v. 14), which obliterates all nationalities, smooths all asperities, reduces all to the same level of guilt and forgiveness before God, and, like companies ascending the different sides of a mountain, brings them nearer to each other as they approach the end of their journey in heaven. This is the Church of Christ, and all other descriptions—papacy, episcopacy, presbytery—are not the boundaries of the unsearchable love of Christ. His election and his grace are free, and it is only ignorance or superstition which dares to circumscribe his mercy.

(3) They are *partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel*. This promise was a Jewish hope. He was to be the seed of the woman—a Man; the seed of Abraham—a Jew; the son of David—a King; the son of a virgin—a holy Child. But, though Abraham and the Jewish nation were to be the centre of the divine manifestations, the effects of them were to flow freely out to all, “that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus, that we might receive the Spirit through faith” (Gal. iii. 14). Hence the apostle says the Gentiles are *partakers*—or rather *joint-partakers*—of his promise in Christ by the gospel. The Jews are the root, the seed, the centre of blessing; Gentiles must come to their light and kings to the brightness of their glory. This explains the difference between “of faith” and “through faith” (Rom. iii. 20). The Jews are justified *out of* the faith that belongs to their race and nation; the Gentiles, *through* a faith which is foreign to them. The same distinction runs through Ps. lxxvii. and Isa. xi. and

many other scriptures. So the *ensign is of the people*, but the *Gentiles* seek it (Isa. xi. 10); so *Israel* shall blossom and fill the face of the *world* with fruit (Isa. xxvii. 6); so receiving of the rejected nation shall be life from the dead (Rom. xi. 15); so the gospel was to be preached to all nations, *beginning* at Jerusalem (Luke xxiv. 47). Let us, then, receive the promise of God in Christ, and in so doing we become the true Jews (Phil. iii. 3), denizens of the New Jerusalem which is above, which is free, which is the mother of us all.

*Sixth. The apostolic ministry.* Come, now, and let us leave for a moment the great subjects which concern the whole Church and turn to *individual* grace in the apostle Paul. The history of the whole is reacted and reproduced in the various parts. A sanctified soul dilated is the Church; the whole Church abridged is a believer. So it is in nature. The race is Adam expanded, and all the varieties of history have their germs and principles in each individual. In the ministry of the apostle we have the type and example of all true ministry.

(1) He says (ver. 7), "Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power." The Greek here for *minister* is *deacon*, which denotes in the word both official service of a particular kind and service in general. As a rule, the higher office includes the lower. Paul was an apostle, an elder, a bishop and a deacon, though bishops, elders and deacons were not apostles. Paul as an *apostle* was *sent of God*; as *bishop*, the overseer of the Church; as *elder*, a wise, experienced man, like Peter (1 Pet. v. 1) a witness of the

sufferings of Christ; and as *deacon*, the simple servant or minister. The word seems to imply earnest, dangerous, hasty service—a service which leads one *through dust*, like the swift messengers of a king. This, then, is the assertion of Paul: I am a minister of the *gospel*, or of *God* (1 Cor. iii. 5; 2 Cor. iii. 6; vi. 4; 1 Thess. iii. 2), or of *Christ* (2 Cor. xi. 23; Eph. vi. 21; Col. i. 7; iv. 7), or of the *Church* (Col. i. 25). These expressions are not contradictory, but most harmonious. They are the various sides of the same subject: This, then, is my service for God, for the gospel of God, for the Son of God, for the Church of God. I live in and for this ministry; I have neither time, wish nor heart for anything else. Love—the love of Christ—constrains me (2 Cor. v. 14), that I can glory only in the cross, and write only of the Crucified, and live and labor and die only for him. This is the ministry which I have received from him—sometimes miraculous, sometimes apostolical, sometimes episcopal, sometimes presbyterial, and sometimes as a daily laborer in the gospel-field (2 Cor. vi. 4). This is the noble, reasonable service which can be rendered to him, alike in sorrow and in joy, among friends and enemies, in the temple of Jerusalem, in the perils of the deep, in the dungeons of Rome, in the household of Cæsar.

(2) But we note that Paul was *made* a minister. It was not by his own will or attainments that he arrived at the high honor of laboring and suffering for Jesus Christ. It was the choice of God, and not his own choice (Gal. i. 15, 16): God's eternal love, without merit or deserving on my part, but according to the gift of his grace, made me what I am by the effectual working of his power. So it is still, and should be,

with every minister of the gospel. He receives the heavenly call, and consults no more with flesh and blood. He knows neither the ambition nor the hypocrisy of the *nolo episcopari* of after-times, but, attributing all to the grace of God, faces without fear the perils of an unknown and tempestuous course. Paul's starting-point was simply *grace*; and grace followed him like the stream in the wilderness, from Damascus, where he first began to live, to Rome, where he finally received the martyr's crown; and all his Epistles, whatever the occasion and however various, breathe only and always the healthful spirit of free grace. This is, indeed, the main difference between the gospel and other systems of religion, whether they be apostasies, as Judaism and the papacy, or impostures, as Hinduism and Islam. Merit characterizes the one, grace the other.

We come now to—

*Seventh. The unsearchable riches of Christ* (ver. 8). You cannot fail to notice the wonderful contrasts, varieties and excellences of the person of Christ. The Psalms contemplate him as the *poor man* crying to the Lord for help; the Gospels describe him as the public preacher, the homeless sufferer. If riches consist in houses, lands, money, friends and worldly consideration, he was poor indeed, for he had none of these. Though the Heir of the house of David, he was born in a stable; no train of courtly ministers welcomed into life the Child of so many prophecies and the Harbinger of such immortal hopes. Shepherds, star-directed sages and angelic hosts might be attracted to the birthplace of the Prince of life, but the great world slept on and knew not the day of its visitation. His birth, his life and his death were all equally inconsistent with the

general estimate of wealth: "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" (2 Cor. viii. 9).

But what are the riches mentioned in Scripture? These are manifold, such as the riches of his *goodness* which means the riches of one disposed to bless us and do us good; here, indeed, the riches of Christ are unsearchable. The fountain was ever full, alike in the Father's bosom and on the accursed tree, the ocean-fountain of his good-will to men. Then there are the *riches of his grace* (Eph. ii. 7), which is nothing but goodness brought into action, and here, too, the riches of Christ are unsearchable. We read of the riches of his *mercy*, the riches of his *wisdom*, the riches of his *glory*; and in all these respects Jesus Christ is presented to the believer, in Scripture, as the all-sufficient portion of the soul, presenting ever-varied and new delights and satisfying its enlarging faculties with all the fullness of God.

We may realize something of the unsearchable riches of Christ by glancing at his *character*, his *work* and his *dominion*.

(1) *His character*. He appears before the Jewish nation as the promised Messiah and Deliverer, and his claims are rejected by the great majority of his countrymen. Yet his doctrine is clear and uniform, and his teaching elicits from his enemies the confession, "Never man spake like this man." As a Teacher he is the only one among mankind who laid the foundations of a purely moral and spiritual kingdom. In every word and in every act you meet the deep, broad lines of perfect human sympathy and love; yet he is sur-

rounded with an awe which prevents all familiarity and makes even the most intimate of his disciples afraid to approach him. Nor is this marvelous. We know and feel that he is human, but we suspect that he is something more. Then there is not only love and sympathy and human weakness, but also the power of holiness, goodness and truth. The light is too bright for us. He weeps, indeed, with us, and perfectly shares all our joys and sorrows; but even in so doing there is something peculiar and striking. He makes no mistakes, as we do; his words are without hesitancy, and his actions without effort; he has no counselors or advisers through whom he arrives at right conclusions. He is never out of place; among the Jewish doctors in the temple, in the house of Joseph and Mary his mother, among the multitudes on the mount, at a marriage-feast, at the grave of Lazarus, in the judgment-hall and on the bleeding cross his character appears equally beautiful. Nothing is distant that should be near, nothing forgotten that should be remembered, and nothing attempted that is not performed. He speaks, and it is done; he works and is not weary; and all that we must admire in him of the human and tender seems to flow from a fountain that is divine and inexhaustible. How rich is the character of Christ! Oh how full of all tender and holy associations! How varied, and yet how simple! What names and offices and attributes centre in him and are all united there! Here the eye finds the centre of moral beauty, and the heart the home of all that can attract and tranquillize it. He is my Prophet, Priest and King, from whom alone my spirit obtains knowledge, pardon and power. In

him we have all the hidden treasures of wisdom and knowledge, the well-spring of all earthly and celestial joys. The vast and the little, the awful and the attractive, meet in his person in wonderful harmony and beauty. He is mortal, yet the Author of life and immortality to us all; he dies, and in dying he conquers and slays by being slain. He ennobled our nature and showed to the angels and the universe what virtues it was capable of, what varieties of condition it could sustain and appropriate, from the stable of Bethlehem to the throne of God. He is, in one word, Emmanuel, God with us. Such is his character, and surely the riches of it are unsearchable.

(2) Only a few words on the riches of *his work*, for the theme is so vast that we cannot enter upon it particularly. We would offer only a few hints to help us to understand something of his unsearchable riches. His work includes his active and his passive obedience, his doing and his dying, his perfect fulfilling of the law and his perfect atonement on the cross. This is the justifying righteousness of Christ which is imputed to the sinner in the act of believing. How rich in blessing his work in our nature has been no mortal tongue can tell. It has removed the barriers between us and God, so that mercy may flow freely without sacrificing justice. The Sin-Forgiver is separated from the sin-indulger, and the righteousness of the inflexible law vindicated and magnified, even in the fullest proclamations of his pardoning love. For you it has opened the kingdom of heaven. The span of his life and the few hours of his death have perfected a work which extends its blessings from the fall to the end of time; from the hill of Calvary flows the fountain



which is to fertilize all lands and refresh the whole heritage of God when it is weary. The merit of one person is such that it covers and cancels the guilt of millions. The moral beauty of one marred form (Isa. liii. 1-6) hides from the eye of justice the apostasy of a world. All ages are interested in the few hours of the cross; the hopes of all cluster around the Man of sorrows; and justice and mercy, time and eternity, the past, the present and the future, the glory of God and the salvation of man, are all internally and essentially connected with the riches of *his work*. The hell from which he delivers, the kingdom of heaven which he opens to believers, the depth of his humiliation, the height of his exaltation in our nature, the vindicated law of the Judge and the mercy of the forgiving Father,—all tell of his riches, the unsearchable riches of his work for sinful man.

But search thine own heart, brother, and tell me what it says of unsearchable riches. Has love found no echo there—his dying love? Can you say, The love of Christ constraineth us? Is all this mighty work of God only a name for thee? Or hast thou in very deed apprehended with Paul the unsearchable riches of Christ? The issues of eternity are at stake, and the Lord thy Redeemer calls thee. Come! Be done with excuses, and cast in thy lot with the Saviour and the saints. He is, and can be, more to thee than all the world besides. He lives and loves thee still.

“Come, ye weary sinners, come,  
 All who groan beneath your load;  
 Jesus calls his wanderers home:  
 Hasten to your pardoning God.  
 Come, ye guilty souls oppressed,  
 Answer to the Saviour’s call:

‘Come, and I will give you rest;  
Come, and I will save you all.’”

(3) *His dominion.* Jesus Christ is the Lord and Redeemer of the human soul. When the temple has been purified and garnished with the fruits of righteousness, it becomes the choice residence of the Lord. From the inner shrine of the soul he rules the whole faculties, thoughts and actions of the man, and imparts to the newly-awakened powers of life and activity within him fresh zeal, energy and distinctness. He expels the idols (1 Thess. i. 9), and, having purified the temple, makes it the blessed seat and throne of his own pure love. Here we find all the rich treasures of his grace in manifold use and exercise; so that the living, conscious, rejoicing soul finds enlargement and fruitfulness, beauty, contentment and strength, in submission to his authority (2 Cor. v. 14). Here we have the beginning of his unsearchable riches, the seed which shall swell out and fructify until faith shall be lost in sight and the weeping seed-time (Ps. cxxvi. 6) be changed into a harvest of glory.

But consider his riches as the Head of the Church—the Ruler, not of one soul, but of many, the King and Governor of all believers. Sit with me upon the hill of Nazareth or the Mount of Olives and contemplate the unsearchable riches of His love who, erewhile the weak and weary Man, the sin-bearing Lamb, is now the Sceptre-Bearer of creation, before whom all the hosts of heaven sing and worship and adore. The stream seemed weak and shallow at the beginning, but it flowed on age after age, deepening and widening as it ran, until nation after nation drank of its waters; and it flows on still, and must continue to flow until

the whole earth be turned into the garden of the Lord. This is the reign of grace, his kingdom of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, and its riches are unsearchable. From the Father's throne where he sits he governs his Church as he pleases, and sheds through all her members in the cycling ages the pulsations of his own ineffable and immortal life; so that in the Head and the members there is one heart and one spirit, one will to glorify God, one victory over sin, Satan and the world, and one great office to present the riches of divine grace to a ruined world. The Church, the race, the angels, the material universe, are all under the control of the God-Man (Eph. i. 21, 22), and the unknown power of the Deity before which we tremble is guided by the known love of our God and Father in Christ Jesus. This is the glory of his dominion, and is at the same time the glory of the human race. He guides all with a *human* hand, and man has been manifested as the royal and dominant race which through the ages of eternity shall stand nearest Jehovah's throne, which, no new creation displacing or succeeding, shall, in the person of the adorable Redeemer, remain for ever at the head of creation—the finite that approaches most nearly to the glory and the majesty of the infinite God. Truly in his person, in his work and in his dominion we see the unsearchable riches of Christ.

*Eighth. Faith's estimate.* But, while the riches of Christ are exalted, man is to be humbled; and this can be done only by the Spirit of God. "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." "Less than the least." Such

irregular forms are not defects, but beauties, and arise from the necessity of the case. (See 3 John 4, where we have a double comparative.) The Germans use the form *mehrere*, from *mehr*, and the Greeks, in both former and later times, used similar exceptionable forms. (Sext. Emp., ix. 406; Apoll. Rhod., iii. 187. See Buttmann, i. 279, and Winer, *Gram.* 65.) When we meet with such expressions we have only to say, "Man was not made for language, but language for man." Paul remembers in Greece what he was by nature (1 Tim. i. 13) and how he wasted and persecuted the Church of God. True faith humbles us and makes us feel every sin as a stain upon our white robes and a wounding of our Father's honor. He considers himself less than the least of all saints. He was late in entering the Church of Christ; he had spent much of his time and zeal in the service of fanaticism and falsehood; and, worse than all, he had persecuted and wasted the Church of God. He is now, indeed, making up for his former error and ignorance by preaching among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.

*Ninth. Teaching, the Church's duty.* She must labor in the same field with the apostles and follow the direction and guiding of her Head. What was the apostle's aim? To make all men see—that is, to teach all men the fellowship of—the mystery which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ. That is the duty of the Church. She is the teacher, the educator, the civilizer, the regenerator of the nations. Our text in this ninth verse reads *fellowship*: "*And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who*

*created all things by Jesus Christ.*" But the better reading is "dispensation." (See Bengel, Wetstein, Mathaer, Grusbach, Bloomfield and Tischendorf.) Paul would teach all men to know something of the dispensation of the hidden mystery, and he asserts it was hidden in God from the beginning of the world. This ninth verse, then, teaches the following facts and truths: (1) It is a great thing to be a preacher of the gospel; (2) Paul was the preacher and apostle of the Gentiles; (3) The union of the Jews and Gentiles in one body is a great mystery; (4) This mystery was hidden in God from the beginning of the world; (5) God created the world through the agency of Jesus Christ. These things the Church is to teach. Her duty is to teach all men, to make all men see the glories of the economy of grace. Not to sacrifice, as the papists assert, is the apostolic ministry appointed, but to teach all men the mysteries of the gospel of Christ. Every word here negatives the idea of a sacrificing priesthood and a religion of symbols and sacraments. The gospel is *phos*—a diffusing, sin-dispelling *light*—and by its very nature must shine if it exists at all. It is as easy to conceive of the sun without light, or of fire without heat, as of the gospel without an expansive and assimilating force. The seed, however secretly sown, will make its appearance in all the forms of buds, leaves, greenness and manifold fruitfulness. Hence, as the star which shines no more is a fallen star, so the Church which is not a missionary Church is dead and wants the first great sign of apostolicity—the very sign, indeed, which made the early Church the wonder and the glory of the world.

We may add, here, it is the direct *command of God*

that we should send the gospel to the nations and teach them the present economy of his grace (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20; Mark xvi. 15; Luke xxiv. 47; Acts ii. 38, 39; Rom. x. 18; Col. i. 23. (See, especially, the fine passage, Rom. xv. 25, 26.) Those who think otherwise are acting as heathen and deceiving their neighbors with a false name.

*Tenth.* But what are they to teach? Answer: *The dispensation of the mystery of God.* The apostle returns to this subject, and we follow him gladly, fully persuaded that God is wiser than men and that our noblest place is simply to *learn*. Observe, then, on the word *mystery* (which occurs Matt. xiii. 11; Mark iv. 11; Luke viii. 10; Rom. xi. 25; xvi. 25; 1 Cor. ii. 7; iv. 1; xiii. 2; xv. 51; Eph. i. 9; iii. 3, 4, 9; v. 32; vi. 19; Col. i. 26, 27; ii. 2; iv. 3; 2 Thess. ii. 7; 1 Tim. iii. 9; Rev. i. 20; x. 7; xvii. 5-7), that it is not something in its own nature inexplicable, for nothing is or can be so. God understands everything. All mysteries in nature and in grace are in themselves clear, consistent and intelligible, though our faculties may not be able to comprehend them. Nor is it something like the *heathen mysteries*, which we should conceal, which, like the Puseyite atonement, we should preach with reserve—a mystic incantation like charms of pagans and papists, which may be safely committed only to the initiated few. No; it is something that may be known and should be proclaimed to the world (Mark iii. 14; Rom. xvi. 25; 1 Cor. iv. 1; xiii. 2; Eph. iii. 3; vi. 19); it is something that was long concealed, but is now made manifest through the mercy of God (Eph. vi. 19; Col. i. 26); something that we can partially understand even here, but is to be fully

realized in the light of the heavenly throne. It was "hidden in God." While the mystery remains hidden, he is *God*; when it is revealed, he is *Father*. We know his power, but not his purpose, and therefore we tremble before him. His purpose, *revealed*, tranquilizes us; for, though it does not diminish the power of the Deity, it shows that the thunderbolts are guided by a Father's hand. God and Father—viz., nature and grace; the mystery hidden and the mystery revealed; almighty power and eternal mercy—are united and harmonized in Jesus Christ our Lord, who is the central Person and sustaining Head of this dispensation of manifested mystery.

I have already expounded *economy*, or "dispensation," and need not here refer to it particularly. It is the plan or purpose of Jehovah's love for the redemption and benediction of his creatures, laid before the worlds (Eph. i. 4) in Christ, hidden from the ages (it is folly to think of the Gnostic æons here) in the bosom of God, but gradually and slowly unfolding itself in the cycles of time like a seed of life in the form of promise and hope, until, in the Babe of Bethlehem, in the great Teacher of Galilee, in the dying Lamb, in the rising King and Conqueror of sin, death and Satan, it received, and is receiving, its full and final development.

*Eleventh.* *Who created all things by Jesus Christ* (ver. 9). This teaches that Jesus was the delegated agent of God in the creation of the world, and is the same in substance as Heb. i. 2 and 1 Cor. viii. 6, where the phrase "of whom" denotes the Father as the source of being, or, as the Greeks express it, the "fount of deity," and the phrase "through whom" the Son as the one eternal medium between God and the creation.

These and other scriptures clearly enough teach that He who came forth in the Father's name to save us by his cross went forth erewhile in the Father's might to create the universe, and shall come forth once more in the glory of the Father as the Judge of quick and dead. In him the will of the Deity takes form and effect, even as in the Holy Ghost every work and way of God is finished and perfected. But if "through" be distinctive of the Son in his whole official character as the Revealer of God, whether in creation, redemption or judgment, we are not to suppose that it denotes any natural or necessary inferiority. Other words are used, and, indeed, every form of expression is applied to him which can designate the Creator of the universe; all things were created *in* him and *through* him and *for* him (Col. i. 16). He is the upholder, the instrumental and the final cause of all things (John i. 3). It is therefore the doctrine of the New Testament that the Son of God is truly and properly the Creator, and consequently the true and eternal Son, in whom dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

But what is the nature of the creation mentioned in the text? All the Socinians and Rationalists of former times maintained that the *all things* must refer to the new creation, and not to the physical world; but, since it is found that the words "through Jesus Christ" are not genuine (Bengel, Mill, Griesbach, Rinck, Bloomfield, etc.), they are unanimous that "all things" refers to the visible creation. De Wette, indeed, says very candidly that there is no necessity for spiritualizing the creation, seeing the words "through Jesus Christ" are not genuine. Thus our opinions guide our principles of interpretation. It is true, indeed, that Calvin and other orthodox inter-



preters expounded the passage as referring to the moral creation, but without any just or necessary reason. When criticism leaves the natural sense of words, it becomes a nuisance instead of a benefit to the Church and to the world. It is impeded by no obstacles, sticks at no absurdities and trembles before no blasphemies. I heard one of the leading minds of Germany, a professor of theology, assert with all gravity, in an assembly of divines and professors, that Paul nowhere teaches the *pre-existence of Christ*, and he set himself vigorously to expound Col. i. 16 according to this theory. It was, however, tough work, and reminded me of Robert Hall's allusion to an ass eating thistles.

But let us now turn to the tenth verse and contemplate for a little—

*Twelfth. The manifold wisdom of God.* The wisdom of God is the divine skill, prudence and foreknowledge which are peculiar to the Deity, and is here, evidently, to be taken in its largest signification (Rom. xi. 33; 1 Cor. i. 1, 21, 24; Col. ii. 3; Rev. v. 12; vii. 12). It is applied to the wonderful manifestations of God in the person of Jesus Christ (Matt. xi. 19; Luke vii. 35; xi. 49). (Comp. Matt. xxiii. 34, where Jesus appropriates the wisdom of God (Luke xi. 49) to himself.) Thus the whole plan for the salvation of the Church, and the execution of it in the Head and in the members, is characterized by being *manifold* or multifarious. The Greek word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, but it belongs to that class of compounds which any Greek speaker or writer could form as the occasion required; \* very variegated, many-colored; a wisdom which bears examination and at every turn unfolds new beauties.

\* Rückhert.

How manifold as applied to the different states, ages and dispensations of the Church and the world! as applied to the means which the Spirit uses in the conversion and edification of the Church! as to the trials, sufferings and temptations out of which the Church emerges fair as the sun, clear as the moon and terrible as an army with banners! Look at the divine plan in all its parts and consequences, as far as feeble human minds can understand it, and say, is not the wisdom of God manifold? The ancient purpose itself in the bosom of God; the manifestation of it in the Christ in time; the means of applying its blessings to the souls of men; the way in which the law is vindicated, while the law-breaker is spared; the cross of Christ kindling in human hearts a flesh-crucifying, world-conquering, death-defying love; the clear immortal hope beyond the grave; the coming and kingdom of the Son of man; the promises, prophecies and threatenings of both the law and the gospel,—all these are manifestations of the manifold wisdom of God. Is not this a firm ground to stand on? Here, brother, is the Rock of ages, on which you can rest with safety. Here you have infinite power to defend you, the manifold wisdom of God to guide you in all things, and eternal love to transform you into the divine image.

But this manifold wisdom of God is made known by the Church to the powers and principalities in the heavenly abodes: *“To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God.”* These are the angels who inhabit the heavenly house. (See Eph. i. 21; iii. 10; Col. ii. 10.) (Comp. 1 Cor. xiv. 24; Eph. vi. 12; Col. i. 16; ii. 15; Rom. viii. 38.)

Christ himself is *Archè*, the head and origin of all authority and power (Col. i. 16-18), and these powers and principalities of heaven are the messengers and supporters of his throne. One would think this verse plainly enough teaches the doctrine of angels; but no: the German Sadducees can see no angels in this or in any other passage of Scripture. Zeger makes them earthly rulers; Schoetten, Jewish rabbis; and Till, heathen priests. Anything you like but angels! O ye materialists, ye swinish brood of Epicurus! But ye are learned and wise! Go herd with your brother-brutes in your filthy sty, and grunt, as ye have no voice for singing. Beauty, majesty and glory have no charms for you. Life, immortality, future glory, the golden harps, the songs of the seraphim, can draw no sympathy from your dull, stupid affections. Your hearts are only muscles, your souls configurations of the brain; four lusty limbs, with a voracious stomach between them, make up your idea of *man*. Death is the end of the journey, and annihilation the hope of the species:

“Eat, drink and die! What can the rest avail us?”  
So said the royal sage Sardanapalus.”

But how is this wisdom of God made known to the angels *by the Church*? Be it remembered that the Church is the theatre on which the great drama of life and death is being transacted, the battle-field where the two opposing kingdoms come into contact, where the struggle between sin and righteousness is to be finally decided, and consequently the *mirror* in which the angels behold the struggles and the triumphs of redeeming love. They followed the Re-

deemer to Nazareth (Matt. i. 20), to the wilderness (Matt. iv. 11), to the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke xxii. 43), to the grave (Matt. xxviii. 2), to the Mount of Olives, and from thence to the heavenly throne (Acts i. 10); and they shall come with him when he returns as King and Ju 'ge (2 Thess. i. 7). Do not the angels take a deep interest in the affairs of the Church? (See Luke xv. 7; 1 Cor. xi. 10; Heb. i. 14; 1 Pet. i. 12.) In order, however, to see more clearly how the Church manifests the wisdom of God to the heavenly hosts, let us consider for a moment—

#### THE NATURE AND MINISTRY OF ANGELS.

1. We may learn much from their *names*. The common name is "angels," which denotes that they are the messengers of God and heralds of the great King. The word, in both Hebrew and Greek, is applied in a great variety of ways, but always including the idea of *service* or message-bearing. It may denote *priests, prophets*, men in the *service of God* (Hag. i. 13; Mal. ii. 7; iii. 1; 1 Kings v. 5), a whole nation (Isa. xlii. 19), Christian pastors (Rev. ii. 1, 8, 12, 18), the elements of nature (probably) (Ps. civ. 4).

They are called *saints* (Mark viii. 38; Luke ix. 26; Acts x. 22; Rev. xiv. 10; and *perhaps* Job v. 1; xv. 15).

They are also called *sons of God* (Job i. 6; ii. 1; xxxviii. 7).

In Ps. viii. 6 and Heb. ii. 7 they are probably called *elohim* or gods.

They are called *seraphim* or burners (Isa. vi. 2), and *cherubim*, strong ones, bearers, supporters (Ps. xviii. 11; xcix. 1; lxxx. 1; 2 Sam. xxii. 11).

They are the *watchers*, probably, of Dan. iv. 13, and

The *thrones* and *principalities* of the New Testament, as we have already seen.

From these *names* we can conceive something of the nature of these glorious beings, and we shall give ourselves no trouble about the Jewish, heathen and popish traditions concerning them.

2. There are various *qualities* that are attributed to them in the Holy Scripture, such as that they are not corporeal beings, but *spirits* (Heb. i. 14); they are *invisible* (Col. i. 16), and to become cognizant to our senses must *appear* (Luke i. 11, 22; Matt. ii. 13, 19; Gen. xviii. 2); they are *mighty* angels of might (Greek) (2 Thess. i. 7; see 2 Pet. ii. 11; Matt. xxvi. 53); they are *holy* (Acts x. 22; Rev. xiv. 10); they are *rational, wise* and *benevolent* beings, as their various offices and occupations show; they are very numerous (Dan. vii. 10; Ps. lxxviii. 17; 2 Kings vi. 16; Jude 14; Rev. v. 10; and other places).

3. As to their *offices* and *employments*, take the following brief synopsis of the Scripture doctrines concerning angels: (1) They glorify the most high God in the heavenly temple (Rev. v. 11) along with the redeemed Church (Rev. v. 9, 10). (2) They are guardians of nations (Ex. xiv. 19; xxiii. 20; xxxiii. 2; Num. xx. 16; Josh. v. 13; Isa. lxiii. 9 [some interpret these of Christ]; more fully in Dan. x. 5, 16, 20; and in Dan. xii. 1, etc.). Michael is the guardian and defender of the Jewish nation. (Comp. Jude 9.) (3) They guard and protect individuals (Heb. i. 14; Ps. xxxiv. 7; Gen. xxxii. 1, 2; Ps. xci. 11; Zech. iii. 5, 6, 7, 8). (4) They execute the justice of God on

men and nations, as Sennacherib (2 Kings xix. 35); as Herod (Acts xii. 23); the deliverance of Daniel (Dan. vi. 27; comp. iii. 28); the destruction of Jerusalem (2 Sam. xxiv. 16, 17); Nebuchadnezzar was deposed by the decree of the watchers (Dan. iv. 13-17); they are (probably) present in churches (1 Cor. xi. 10). (5) They shall be present and take part in the judgment of the great day (Matt. xxiv. 30, 31; xiii. 41; 1 Cor. xv. 52; 1 Thess. iv. 16).

Let these remarks suffice for the present on the nature and the offices of the angels, and say, are these great and glorious beings indifferent spectators when the wonders of redeeming love are being accomplished before their eyes? But what do they see there? They see God's estimate of man, the value of the human soul, the price which divine love paid for it, the hatred of Jehovah against sin, and the absolute necessity of holiness as the law which binds the universe to God. In all these things the Church is their teacher. They get new views of grace, of God, of divine love, of providence, of the eternal decrees and of the manifold wisdom of the Creator and Redeemer in all his works. They see perfect justice in all its flaming lineaments sweetly embracing the most tender and forgiving love, the Creator and the Redeemer *one*, the sin-avenging Lawgiver blotting out transgression, while justice, untarnished and immutable, retains all its inviolable sanctions. They see the purpose of Jehovah ripening into maturity as the ages roll on; and, seeing as they do the man Christ Jesus, our Brother and Redeemer, throned in glory above them, they look down upon us in our world of tempests and trials with eyes of compassion, while they anticipate with delight the time

which shall reunite the Head and the members and complete the glorious company of the redeemed.

“Then shall the harps and choirs above  
Dwell on his vast, his wondrous, love;  
Divine the notes and sweet the strain:  
‘Worthy the Lamb that once was slain!’

“With them we gladly, humbly join  
In praise so joyful, so divine;  
No more of sin shall we complain,  
But sing, ‘The Lamb that once was slain!’”

## CHAPTER VII.

According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: in whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him. Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory. For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world with end. Amen.—EPHESIANS iii. 11-21.

WE have considered at some length the varied and extensive field into which the apostle led us in the foregoing verses. His own nothingness contrasts finely with the majesty of grace. He is full of the theme of love, and seems at a loss for words to express the riches of Christ. The calling of the Gentiles, the office of the ministry, the nothingness of man, the unsearchable riches of Christ, the mystery of God's love, the creation of the world through Christ and the manifold wisdom of God in the Church,—all pass in rapid succession before the mind and leave us bewildered with the variety and beauty of the picture. It presents many tints, but they are all of heaven; many rays of



various colors, but they all centre in or emanate from the Sun of righteousness; many streamlets to refresh weary hearts, but they all return again to their own eternal ocean-home, the *pleroma* (Col. ii. 9; comp. John i. 16; Col. i. 19) or fullness of divine nature. This leads to the eleventh verse, which stands in closest connection with the tenth and contains the doctrine of the—

### I. PROTHESIS OR PURPOSE OF GOD.

*According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

This eleventh verse depends on the verb "made known," in verse tenth, and the meaning is this: The manifold wisdom of God is made known by the Church to the angels, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. It was made known in the way and order which God preferred. Man had nothing to do with the forming or the mode of executing it.

The Greek form may be translated literally "the plan of the ages," or *the eternal purpose*, as in our Bible, and this, notwithstanding Macknight's objection, is the natural and most obvious rendering. The plural genitive of the noun is, by a very common construction in all languages, the same as the cognate adjective, and expresses here the same thought as "before the foundation of the world" (Eph. i. 4; 1 Pet. i. 20). This work of divine love in the person of the God-Man was no subsidiary or after thought in the divine mind, but rather the great central one around which all the others revolve. Hence the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." The purpose was

made, the divine plan contained the necessary provisions, and the falling world fell into the arms of the slain Lamb.

I cannot help thinking that they deprive themselves of much comfort who refuse to contemplate the antiquity or eternity of Jehovah's purpose of love. Is it not worthy of God, is it not ennobling to man, that the Creator should think of us so early? Is not the strength of an affection proved by the length of its continuance and the obstacles which it surmounts? Why are those who seek to enlarge his love in one direction most anxious to diminish it in another? They admit the *universality*, but not the *eternity*, of his love; and thus what you gain on the one hand you lose on the other.

But, as I said before, many translate "the plan of the ages" in the sense of a final cause, and refer it to the Headship of Christ as its end (Eph. i. 10, 21; ii. 15; 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23; xi. 3). That the words will readily bear this interpretation is manifest, and the sense is noble and striking. God arranged all the ages and dispensations of the world in and for Jesus Christ his Son as the life-giving Head of the creation, in whom, like a centre of unity, the heavens and the earth, the visible and the invisible, the mortal and the immortal, should find their happiness, their strength and their fellowship with God. The various ages are but the developing of one great plan which embraces and unites them all. The various dispensations, such as the Adamic, patriarchal, Jewish and Christian, are but the opening of the great book of life, the unveiling of the glorious person of Emmanuel, in whom and *for* whom (the Greek  $\epsilon\upsilon$  has this meaning in such passages

as Matt. vi. 7; Rom. iii. 25; 1 Cor. xv. 18; Eph. iii. 13; iv. 1; 2 Tim. ii. 9; 2 Pet. i. 1; ii. 3) they were all ordained. All the developments of divine mercy, from the promise in paradise unto the birth of Christ, are but parts of this all-comprehending plan of the ages, which embraces all nations and generations, and shall be most gloriously manifested in the coming and kingdom of Christ, when the groaning creation shall be at rest and all things be subjected to the holy will of God (Rom. viii. 18, 23).

The word *prothesis*, "plan," is applied to the loaves of bread *arranged in order* before the Lord by the high priest—bread of presentation, or, as the Hebrew has it, "bread of faces" (Ex. xxv. 30; xxxix. 36; 1 Kings vii. 48; 2 Chron. iv. 19; comp. Matt. xii. 4; Luke vi. 4); called also *presentation of bread* (2 Chron. xiii. 11; Lev. xxiv. 5; Ex. xxv. 30). The meaning is nearly the same. The high priest orders and arranges the twelve cakes of bread before the Lord in the temple, and the Lord of the temple arranges in like manner, and with equal ease, the various ages of the world for the coming and manifestation of his Son Jesus Christ. God is the ruler, the orderer, the predestinator, in his own world, and his Son is the end of his working. The King makes the marriage-supper for his Son (Matt. xxii. 2). There is no chance here. Eternal wisdom ordains and almighty power executes the decrees of God, and the final cause is the glory of the Redeemer (Ps. cx.).

Some, not willing to admit the pre-existence of Christ, render the passage thus: "According to his eternal purpose which he *accomplished* in his Son Jesus Christ." This is admissible. (See Matt. xxi.

31; John vi. 38; comp. John viii. 34; 2 Cor. xi. 7; Luke iii. 19; Mark xv. 7; Rev. xxi. 15.) The context, however, renders the former meaning probable. It is concerning the forming, not the execution, of the plan he is speaking. (See also Mark iii. 6; xv. 1.) Both applications of the word are realized in Christ. The purpose was formed *in* him as the Son and Mediator; it was intended *for* him as the end or final cause; and it was accomplished *through* him as the instrument (Col. i. 17).

We come now to the twelfth verse, which shows us the way of—

## II. ACCESS TO GOD.

*In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.*

It is, then, a fact, brother, that the way to God, which sin had barred, is reopened in the redemption of Jesus Christ. *In him* we have access to the holiest of all, for the great offering is accepted and divine justice satisfied. It is a fact that any sinner, even the vilest, may, humbly relying on the merits of Christ, approach the throne of the most high God with acceptance. The angels that never sinned have not freer access to God than have we when we come through the appointed Mediator. Sin is removed through the blood of the cross; heaven is opened to all believers by the Ascension; and, with an open door and a heart full of pardoning mercy, the Father invites the prodigals to return.

“Burdened with a world of grief,  
 Burdened with a sinful load,  
 Burdened with this unbelief,  
 Burdened with the wrath of God,—

Come, ye guilty souls oppressed,  
 Answer to the Saviour's call:  
 'Come, and I will give you rest;  
 Come, and I will save you all.'

(1) Observe what it cost him to make this free proclamation to sinners. The violated law must be vindicated in order that God, in dispensing his pardoning mercy, might not be taken for a sin-indulger. Part of the angels and the whole human race had fallen. Indiscriminate mercy might seem to relax the law of holiness and sanction the sinner in his course of rebellion. Hence the awful sacrifice of his own Son, by which the righteousness of God was vindicated in the way of boundless mercy to mankind.

"To thee, thou bleeding Lamb, to thee,  
 For pardon, peace and life we flee;  
 The shelter of thy cross we claim,  
 Thy righteousness alone we name;  
 Low at thy feet we suppliant fall,  
 Our Lord, our Saviour and our all."

(2) This access is *by the faith of him*, which is the same as the faith *on him* (Phil. iii. 9; Rom. iii. 22). He that hath the Son hath life. Faith is the medium by which we receive his blessings and rest upon him for salvation. Without faith it is impossible to please God. Faith is not the admission into the mind of a certain amount of truth respecting the person and the work of the Son of God, but a holy, confident, joyful resting upon him as the Mediator and Redeemer. He loved me and gave himself for me, and the echo of my spirit is, I love him and give myself up to and for him. That is faith. By this faith we see him, hear his voice and feel his presence in all things. He is the resting-

place and home of faith, where its deepest sorrows and loftiest flights ever lead it, and where alone the weary yet faithful soul can weep its fears away in the sunshine of his love. Seek this faith from God—for it is his gift—and he will not send thee empty away. Be in earnest in this matter, for the stake is great and the time in which to win it may possibly be *short*. Read the following passages with the eye on God, and be not faithless, but believing: Rom. v. 1–3; Eph. ii. 14; John x. 9; xiv. 6; Heb. x. 19; Phil. i. 14; 1 Thess. iii. 3.

(3) In Jesus Christ we have *boldness* in our approaches to the throne of grace. The Greek word *parresia* is variously translated. Meyer gives it, *libertatem dicendi*; Luther, *Freudigkeit*; Rückhert, *Freimütigkeit im Reden*; Macknight, *liberty of speech*; Doddridge, *freedom of speech*; the Vulgate, *fiduciam*; Beza, *libertatem*; Castellio, *audaciam*; Darby, *Freimütigkeit*; Kistemacker, *Vertraulichkeit*; De Wette, *Zuversicht*—so, also, Böckel; Van Ess, *Freudiges Vertrauen*; Harwood, *undaunted freedom*; Martin, *hardiesse*; De Sacy, *la liberté*. The word is found in the following passages: Mark viii. 32; John vii. 4, 13, 26; x. 24; xi. 14, 54; xvi. 25, 29; xviii. 20; Acts ii. 29; iv. 13, 29, 31; xxviii. 31; 2 Cor. iii. 12; vii. 4; Eph. iii. 12; vi. 19; Phil. i. 20; Col. ii. 15; 1 Tim. iii. 13; Philem. 8; Heb. iii. 6; iv. 16; x. 19, 35; 1 John ii. 28; iii. 21; iv. 17; v. 14. The word *parresia* is, therefore, found thirty-one times in the New Testament; in our translation it is rendered four times “plainly;” six times, “openly;” once, “freely;” once, “plainness of speech;” once, “boldness of speech;” once, “bold;” once, “boldly;” eight times, “boldness;” five times, “confidence.” In all the other translations

there is about the same variety. The first and simple meaning of the word is *free liberty to speak*, and hence the natural secondary one, *boldness*, which, after all, I think the best for the passage we are expounding. The believer on the Son of God may approach his heavenly Father with boldness. His person is accepted in the Beloved, and his humble petitions will not be refused; he is no longer the slave, to tremble before the Lord and Judge, but the son, rejoicing in the confidence of a Father's love. He has free access and full liberty to make his requests known to God. The distinction of nations is abolished in the death of Christ, and Jews and Gentiles, as believers, have the right *to speak to God*. Such is the value he sets on the way of access that they who come by it are welcome. Most blessed privilege! Let us use it. Let us abound in prayer, like Daniel, David and the apostles of our Lord.

“With boldness, therefore, at the throne  
 Let us make all our sorrows known,  
 And ask the aids of heavenly power  
 To help us in the evil hour.”

Dr. Chalmers had a store of pithy proverbs which he used as household words; one of them was, “A man of prayer is a man of power.” The old divines remark that Moses' face shone when he came down from the mount of prayer. The good Dr. Doddridge, when under any provocation, was in the habit of repeating the Lord's Prayer before he replied, in order that his mind might be settled and his words well ordered. Our boldness at the throne of grace is far removed from presumption, and must necessarily be

based on and measured by our conformity to the divine image. The boldness of the hypocrite, like his hope, shall perish; but when there is real earnestness of soul and a thirsting after God, there seems to be no limit to the nearness and fellowship and holy boldness which he may and can vouchsafe to his saints.

But we come now to the thirteenth verse, which contains the principle of—

### III. ACCEPTABLE SUFFERING.

*Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.*

The *wherefore* is, in this connection, very important, and carries us into the divine purpose: Seeing, then, that we are parts of the great plan of God for the glorifying of his Son, we should bear one another's burdens: *wherefore* I desire that ye faint not, etc. This clause may be translated, "Therefore I pray that I may not faint under my afflictions for you;" and so it is in the Syriac, Bengel, Semler, Scholz and others, but there are weighty reasons against it. (1) The supplying of *you* is justified by 2 Cor. v. 20; vi. 1; x. 2; Heb. xiii. 19. (2) It is more like the noble, self-denying spirit of Paul to suppose that his mind was occupied with their state rather than his own. (3) The great mass of translators and expositors have so understood it, and the objections of Rückhert and Meyer to the use of the Greek *en* in the sense of "at," "concerning" (see 2 Cor. ii. 17; Eph. iii. 6; Col. i. 27, etc.), are of no moment. The meaning, then, is this: Ye are engaged in the great battle which our Captain is waging against the powers of darkness; I, your leader under him, am cast into prison and can guide you no



more; but stand fast, and faint not in the conflict [so Beza] like cowards and traitors; yield not a foot to the foe on account of my afflictions, which are, indeed, your glory.

From this we draw the following conclusions :

(1) It is a fact that we not only all suffer, but that we all suffer with and for one another. Suffering is, since the entrance of sin, the law of our race, and suffering for one another is the consequence of the unity of the race. We were created in one, and headship has been, and is, the great characteristic of the providence of God toward man from the beginning. He created, he redeemed, he blesses and he curses *the many in the one*. This unity of the human race lays the foundation for atonement, which realizes in grace what is seen every day in nature—the *innocent suffering for the guilty*.

(2) Paul often, as here, boasts in his sufferings and glories in the firmness of faith which triumphs over them (2 Cor. vi. 4, 10; Rom. viii. 35), and Peter teaches us to distinguish between suffering for our own faults and suffering for the sake of Jesus Christ (1 Pet. ii. 20). We *must* suffer, inasmuch as we have sinned. We may bring upon ourselves much *unnecessary suffering* by our own imprudence and sins, and as witness-bearers for the Lord we may be called upon, without any fault of our own, to bear reproach and contumely, and death itself, for the sake of our divine Master. This is the suffering which glorifies God; this is the suffering in which Paul gloried and out of which so many martyrs have won their heavenly crowns (1 Pet. v. 4). We do not our own will, but the will of God; bear not our own cross, but the cross of

Christ; the reproches of them that reproach him fall upon us (Ps. lxxix. 9; Rom. xv. 3). We suffer not for our own faults, but for righteousness' sake, like the apostles and the martyrs, and in so doing we have reason to glory, for the Scripture assures us that if we share his cross we shall also share his crown; if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him; if we be witnesses of the sufferings of Christ, we shall also be partakers of the glory that shall be revealed (1 Pet. v. 1; 2 Tim. ii. 12; Rom. viii. 17; 1 Pet. iv. 13). Yes, and when we have labored and suffered patiently to the last hour of our life, and laid down at his feet all that we have to give, even the *unreserved heart*, we can only lament that we have nothing better to give.

“ Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were an offering far too small:  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my heart, my life, my all.”

There remains to be considered in this verse only the phrase *which is your glory*. What was their glory? Beza refers the *which* to Paul's not fainting in the battle, but this has many difficulties and gives a weak conclusion. The relative must in sense refer to Paul's *afflictions*, however it may be attracted grammatically to the following explanatory noun. This construction is found in the classics and is common in the New Testament (Mark xv. 16; Gal. iii. 16; Eph. i. 14; 1 Tim. iii. 15; Phil. i. 28). The other construction is used in Eph. i. 23; vi. 17; 1 Cor. iv. 17. But what does the sentence mean, “My afflictions are your glory”? It means, You have no need to be ashamed of my bonds; my dungeon is more honorable than a palace;

I suffer for the name of Christ in extending the gospel to you Gentiles as freely as to the Jews. I am suffering, not because I am an evil-doer, but because I obey God. It is not my glory only, but yours. You show the advantages of it by being brought to the fold of the Saviour. Thus we see that the Christian heart is not selfish, and Paul's was overflowing with love and philanthropy. Indeed, where there is love in this world there must be sorrow; and sorrow, on the other hand, looses the chords of love that it may swell out to its own proper dimensions in the renewed soul. We met our Lord, and his beauty draws us after him; and hence the origin of the Church's persecutions. It was that meeting on the way to Damascus which pierced the soul of the apostle and made him count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, which brought him into trials and sorrows of all kinds—into strange lands and perilous seas, into a life of misery and a death of shame, and finally into his Father's house in heaven.

#### IV. THE DOCTRINE OF PRAYER.

*For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ* (ver. 14).

The phrase *for this cause* has been referred to the first verse, to the eighth and to the whole passage. There is, however, no necessity for making difficulties and seeking out remote antecedents when the preceding verse affords the following connection: I am afraid of your *fainting*, and for this cause I pray for you. To "bow the knees" is the sign of adoration, and the phrase is used with the dative of the person and the accusative of the thing (Rom. xi. 4; xiv. 11); is, however, followed by

*in* ("at") (Phil. ii. 10), and in our text by *unto*, with an accusative of the person instead of the dative without any preposition. The same variety of form, both with and without prepositions, is found also in the Hebrew. (See 1 Kings xix. 18; Isa. xlv. 23; Ps. xxii. 30; lxxii. 9.)

This bowing of the knee, says Calvin, "*A signo rem denotat,*" expresses the thing by a sign, and Chrysostom says, "It manifested the fervent desire of the apostle." It is, indeed, the most solemn form of divine worship and well suited the prisoner in Rome, who could see in the Creator of the universe the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Tischendorf and others reject the words "of the Lord Jesus Christ," and read the passage thus: "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." But the mass of authorities seem to be in favor of the words (De Wette), and one cannot see any good reason for adding them had they not been in the original text; nor does the addition bring out any new doctrine, for most certainly the whole Scripture represents God as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Here, then, the apostle consoles himself in his prison by appealing to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; not Father only, but the Father of the incarnate Son, who loved us and died for our sins. This name unites them both in the faith and the love of the apostle: the Sender and the sent One, the Giver and the Gift, are alike in the heart of the faithful servant. (See Rom. xv. 6; 2 Cor. i. 3; Col. i. 3, where the same name or style is used.)

Having thus analyzed the passage, let us now consider the subject contained in it—*prayer*.

*First. What is prayer ?*

It is the cry of weakness to Him that can save; the sigh of distracted hearts to Him who can relieve them. It is very natural to pray. The weak, the miserable, the wretched, the ignorant and the sinful turn their eyes to God, the Source of strength and wisdom and honor and glory and blessing. This is prayer. It is the first and best sign of a believing and gracious state. "Behold, he prayeth," was testimony enough that the old murderous heart had passed or was passing away. It is also the best measure of our progress in the life of holiness and love; he that abides in fellowship with God is likely to be above the concerns of this fleeting world. The saints, martyrs and apostles prayed much, and so must we if we follow their example.

*Second. Why is prayer necessary ?*

Because we have so many wants which can be supplied in no other way. If humanity consisted only of four lusty limbs and an omnivorous appetite, we might feel satisfied without the ideas of God, a future life and the salvation of the soul. But it is not so; we are not only material, but also spiritual and immortal, beings, and the soul, with its boundless desires and necessities, seems satisfied with nothing less than the fullness of God. Prayer opens up this fullness to the enlarging spirit, and with ever-increasing love and knowledge and reverence we hope in this way to approach in some measure the Unapproachable, and to drink more deeply from the fountain of his love. God *commands* us to pray. He knows what suits us best, and his word abounds with exhortations and encouragements to prayer. To the soul that knows itself, and seeks to know God, prayer is absolutely necessary. The dangers of our pilgrimage, the

attacks of our spiritual enemies, the seductions of sin, the world and the flesh, show us the necessity of prayer, by which alone we can meet and conquer them. Besides, there are seasons—such as convictions of sin, strong bodily pain and the agonies of death—when every other source of comfort is vain. No human hand can help; He that created alone can deliver, and the hand that can help must reach beyond the grave. Hence, as Christians, our life, our whole life, is one moving censer of holy incense to God. Our new birth was in prayer, our death is in prayer, and all between is a service of love and obedience consecrated to God by prayer :

“Prayer is the Christian’s vital breath,  
The Christian’s native air;  
His watchword at the gates of death,  
He enters heaven by prayer.”

*Third. How should we pray?*

(1) In the *name* of Jesus Christ the Mediator (John xiv. 13; xv. 16; xvi. 23; Eph. v. 20; Heb. xiii. 15; 1 Pet. ii. 5). His life is our example; his death, our redemption; his righteousness, our refuge in the day of judgment. The doctrine of his sole mediation is one of the clearest and fullest in the Bible; so that the many mediators of modern idolaters are without excuse. The oneness of the mediation stands on the same foundation as the unity of God (1 Tim. ii. 5). There is no other mediator, nor any other name in heaven or on the earth, whereby we can be saved. He is not the mediating Head of a host of mediators, male and female, as the papists dream, reducing the holy gospel to a system of human merit and heathen-

ish superstition. Pray in his name, and you shall be heard, for he is the way to the Father and the door of the sheepfold—the only Advocate and Mediator revealed to us in the word of God.

(2) There should be a right *preparation* for prayer (Ps. lxvi. 18; cxlv. 18; Prov. xv. 8, 29; xxviii. 9; Isa. i. 15; xxix. 13; lix. 2; Mark vii. 6; xi. 25; John ix. 31; 1 Tim. ii. 8; James i. 6; iv. 3).

(3) We should pray *fervently* (Ps. lix. 17; Luke vi. 12; xi. 8; xviii. 1; Rom. xii. 12; Eph. vi. 18).

(4) We should pray *frequently* (Ps. lv. 17; lxxxvi. 3; cxix. 164; Dan. vi. 10; Luke ii. 37; xviii. 1; xxi. 36; Acts x. 2; 1 Thess. iii. 10; v. 17; 1 Tim. v. 5; 2 Tim. i. 3; 1 Pet. iv. 7).

(5) We should pray without *ostentation* (Matt. vi. 6; Luke xviii. 11).

(6) We should pray for all *ranks, classes and conditions* of men (Eph. vi. 18; 1 Tim. ii. 1).

(7) We should pray with the firm *assurance* that we shall be heard (James i. 6; Mark xi. 24; 1 Tim. ii. 8).

It need hardly be added that our prayers must be limited to the things that are agreeable to the will of God. His will is our rule in this as in all things, and his Spirit is promised to help our infirmities (Rom. viii. 26) and guide us into all truth (John xvi. 13).

*Fourth. What are the kinds of prayer?*

Our prayers may be *mental*, like Hannah's (1 Sam. i. 13), where there is no voice, but only the pouring out of the heart before the Lord. Or they may be short *ejaculatory* petitions uttered when we find opportunity during the avocations of the day to keep us mindful of Him in whom we live, move and

have our being. Or they may be *private*, in our own chamber, with no eye to see us and no ear to hear us but God's (Dan. vi. 10; Matt. vi. 6; xiv. 23; Luke vi. 12; Acts x. 9, 30). Or they may be in the *family*, when the members of the household meet for the morning and the evening sacrifice of prayer, thanksgiving and praise. Or they may be in the *social circle*—the prayer-meeting, where several families and friends meet for edification, prayer and praise. Or, finally, they may be in the *church*, the public congregation of the faithful, where thousands engage in the solemn acts of public worship. There we feel ourselves joined to the body of Christ, the whole Church of the living God, in all ages and in all nations. As distinguished from the popish, this is the catholic Church into which we were baptized, in the fellowship with which we desire to live and die. Let us use these various kinds of prayer as our circumstances require, “not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another; and so much the more as ye see the day approaching” (Heb. x. 25).

*Fifth. Examples of prayer.*

These are numerous in the Holy Scriptures, from which we quote only the following: Abraham's servant (Gen. xxiv. 12), Jacob (Gen. xxxii. 9), Moses (Ex. xxxii. 11, 31; Deut. iii. 23), Samson (Judg. xvi. 28), Hannah (1 Sam. i. 10), David (2 Sam. vii. 18), Solomon (1 Kings viii. 22), Hezekiah (2 Kings xix. 15), Manasseh (2 Chron. xxxiii. 12), Daniel (Dan. ix. 3), Jonah (Jon. ii. 1), Habakkuk (Hab. iii. 1), Asa (2 Chron. xiv. 11, 12), Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. xx. 6), Ezra (Ezra ix. 6), the Levites (Neh. ix. 5), Esther



(Esth. iv. 16), Amos (Amos vii. 2-5), Zacharias (Luke i. 13), the Lord's Prayer (Matt. vi. 9), that in his agony (Matt. xxvi. 39), that for his Church (John xvii. 1, etc.), Cornelius (Acts x. 1). These, with other similar examples, will teach us in what way we should approach the mercy-seat on high.

*Sixth.* Are there no examples of prayer *for others*?

Yes, many. Abraham prayed for Abimelech (Gen. xx. 17); Jacob, for his wife (Gen. xxv. 21); Moses, for the people (Ex. xxxii. 11; xxxiii. 12); Moses, for Miriam (Num. xii. 13); Samuel, for the people (1 Sam. xii. 2, 3); the church, for Peter (Acts xii. 5); Stephen, for his murderers (Acts vii. 60); Jesus, for his enemies (Luke xxiii. 34); the church, for Paul (Rom. xv. 30); Paul, for the Jews (Rom. x. 1); Paul, for the Church (2 Cor. i. 11; Eph. i. 16; vi. 18; Col. iv. 3; 1 Thess. i. 2; 2 Thess. iii. 1; Heb. xiii. 18). We should pray for our enemies (Matt. v. 44). These examples may help us in the practice of intercessory prayer.

*Seventh.* As to the *posture of the body*, we have no rule in Holy Scripture, and we should make no restriction upon Christian liberty. The Germans sit at prayer, both in their families and in their churches. and yet they take the Lord's Supper standing, for which no authority can be given. For private, family and social worship kneeling seems to be the most proper and convenient mode (Eph. iii. 14). In the temple and synagogue service the Jews stood at prayer (1 Kings viii. 22), yet before the end Solomon knelt (ver. 54). Is there a distinction to be taken between praying and blessing (ver. 55)? (Luke xviii. 11). The English kneel (if, indeed, that bend downward can so be called), the Scotch stand and the Teutonic nations sit at

prayer. When the papists come before altars and images for prayer they kneel, and the Greeks prostrate themselves on the earth. The pope sits at the Lord's Supper to show that he can dispense with the ordinances of God, but commands his followers to kneel. He does right and commands you to do wrong, and you must obey on pain of damnation. He sits, as Christ did, and you must kneel because he bids you.

*Eighth.* In times of trial, suffering or public danger we should abound in prayer that the Church might be kept faithful, that the name of the Lord Jesus might be glorified, and that the Lord would be pleased, for his Son's sake, to guide the affairs of the nations and sanctify the dispensations of his providence to the glory of his name and the welfare of his people. Hence, to the God of heaven Paul bowed his knees in the dungeons of Rome and Daniel made his supplication. Suffering leads to prayer, and hence the times of persecution have been, in some respects, blessed times for the Church.

And now, O God, give me, and all that fear thy name, the spirit of prayer and supplication! Give us the faith that works by love and purifies the heart! May we live in fellowship with thee here, and finally obtain thy kingdom and glory through Jesus Christ our Lord! Amen.

#### V. THE WHOLE FAMILY OF GOD.

*Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named* (ver. 15).

The apostle consoles himself in the loneliness of his prison with the great principles of the economy of grace, which it was the aim of his life to proclaim to

every creature. His spirit was free. The eternal purpose of God contains in it, said Paul, many such sorrows and disappointments as mine. Still, I am not without great consolations. I am part of his great plan; I have access to his throne of grace through Christ; I am set for an example to others, and I can look up to the Creator as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.

Who gives his name to the family? The fifteenth verse is ambiguous, in both Greek and English. To whom are we to refer the phrase *of whom*? The nearest antecedent is the Lord Jesus Christ, and to him many commentators, as Calvin, Beza, Zanchius, Rhenferd, etc., refer it. In this case the meaning will be that the Lord Jesus Christ has given the name "Christian," and all which the name covers, to the one family of God. I am of opinion, however, that even if the words "our Lord Jesus Christ" should turn out to be genuine (Tischendorf rejects them), we should refer the *of whom* to the Father, and that for the following reasons: It is the Father that gives the name to the family generally, and hence the *patria* seems naturally to refer to the *pater*, the *family* to the *father*. It is the Father to whom the apostle bows his knees, and so he is the principal person in the verse. The words "of our Lord Jesus Christ" may be omitted and the sense remain complete. The meaning is that the whole family is related to the Father *by name*; the heavenly and the earthly members have in this respect the same privilege. Most of the German commentators take *patria* in the sense of "race," and interpret the passage thus: "Every

kind of created being derives its origin out of God the Father, and bears his name as Creator;" and many can see no reference whatever to the children of God in the passage (Harless, Rückhert, etc.). But surely the word *patria* naturally means "family," and not "race;" and it may be so translated in every passage where it occurs in the New Testament (Luke ii. 4; Acts iii. 25; Eph. iii. 15). Herodotus uses it in the same sense (ii. 143; iii. 75). It is the *beth-ab* ("paternal house") of the Hebrews (Ex. vi. 25; Num. i. 18). There is, therefore, a great propriety, so far as the word itself is concerned, and so far as respects its use in Scripture, in translating it by the word *family*.

But we now come to the important question, "Is *pasa* here to be rendered 'every' or *the whole*?" That the Greek *pas*, not followed by a substantive with the article, is *generally* taken in a partitive sense seems to be an understood fact, and therefore the simplest and most natural translation here would be "every family;" but when it is said that *πασα πατρια* cannot fairly be rendered *the whole family*, I deny the assertion, and can show from the New Testament many examples where it *may* be so translated, and some where it *must*. (See Matt. xii. 31; Acts ii. 36; x. 14; 1 Cor. i. 29; xv. 39; 2 Cor. x. 6; Eph. iv. 31; v. 3, 5; vi. 18; Phil. i. 20; 2 Tim. ii. 2; and others.) I hold, therefore, that the common English translation, *the whole family*, is a proper one, and, the whole passage considered, perhaps the best that can be given.

Let us now leave the dry region of verbal criticism and contemplate for a moment *the whole family of God*. We observe, then, that the family is *one*, though divided into *two* parts. Some have passed over the Jordan and

enjoy the glories of the New Jerusalem and the promised land; they have conquered and received their crown; they lived and died in faith, and their robes are made white in the blood of the Lamb. They know the reality of the divine love which centres in the person of the Redeemer, on earth hidden, veiled in the vestments of our mortal nature, but now radiating in the splendor of resurrection glory. His presence fills all hearts with joy; angels, saints, cherubim and seraphim are around his throne; the unfallen and the redeemed are alike sharers of his beneficence. They are in the kingdom of glory—no hunger, no thirst, no weariness, no weakness, no wants; no more sins to lament over, no more temptations to resist, no more enemies to overcome. There is no more death, and sorrow and sighing have fled away. The long-alienated are now reconciled; the long-divided have at last met in their Father's house. This is heaven, and this is the believer's home. But we are still *in the flesh*. They are triumphing with their King, and we are fighting his battles. They are in Canaan, and we are in the wilderness. We have the manna, the guiding pillar and the frail tabernacles; they, the corn and the wine and the fixed temple of the New Jerusalem. We are following in their train, and our faith is quickened and strengthened by the cloud of witnesses with which we are surrounded.

Stand fast, brother! Do not yield. Thou art not alone in the fight. Jesus is with thee. The apostles and prophets in heaven are before thee. The glorious army of the martyrs sees thee. The eye that met Stephen's in his trials is upon thee. And oh, consider the reward! Life, purity, holiness, the fellow-

ship of eternal love, the presence of the Son of God, unutterable nearness to God himself, enlarged and perpetually increasing knowledge,—these are before thee; and are they not worth struggling for? Perish the sins that would deprive me of this hope, be they the dearest, sweetest, that ever deceived man! Shall I listen to the world or heed its siren voice, when Jesus calls me to follow him? Shall I hesitate between a few years and eternity? Shall I yield to influences which must degrade me rather than to the hopes that can make me a man, a conqueror and an heir of heaven? Never! By God's help I will take my lot with the saints and follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.

Take the following notes as to the members of this family.

(1) *They are all one.* They have one God and Father, one Lord and Saviour, one faith, one baptism and one hope of their calling. They have all the same enemies, the same friends, the same temptations and the same joys. They all enter the family in the same way, and they all enjoy the same everlasting inheritance.

(2) *There are great varieties in the family.* Some are in heaven, and others upon the earth; some are militant, and others are triumphant; some are weak, and others are strong in faith, giving glory to God. All are soldiers of the cross, but there is a great difference between raw recruits and accomplished warriors—those who are entering upon and those who are triumphing over the difficulties of the campaign. The varieties of different ages, nations, political and ecclesiastical names and institutions, have tinged their character with many hues, but the head and the heart, the faith, hope and charity, are all the same.

(3) They have many *names* and many *symbols* which express something of their nature and office. They are the *elect*, chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world; they are the *redeemed Church*, washed in his blood from all defilement; they are believers, converts, new creatures, with a new name upon them, a new heart within them, a new heaven above them and a new earth beneath their feet. All things are become new. They are his people, his fold, his bride, his temple, his house, the trees of his planting, the work of his hands that he may be glorified. He is the Head, and they are the body; he is the Vine, and they are the branches; he is the Foundation, and they are the living stones. All this is expressive of the nature of the family and their relations to the Saviour.

But let us now consider—

#### VI. THE CONTENTS OF THE APOSTLE'S PRAYER.

*That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God* (ver. 16-19).

The *first thing* he prays for is *strength*—that they should “*be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.*” (See in the Septuagint, 2 Sam. x. 12; 2 Chron. xxi. 4; 2 Kings xv. 19; and in our translation, Col. i. 11.)

We need *strength*; we have in ourselves no power to

resist the current of evil in the world. We need to be mightily strengthened by the power of the Holy Ghost—his own Spirit, the Comforter. (Comp. Eph. vi. 10 and Col. i. 11.) Paul would have the Ephesians *strong*, and his first petition is to that effect; and it may well teach us where the source of our victories is to be found. Jehovah is the strength of his people, and, like every other gift, his power to help is ministered unto the saints and registered in their hearts by the Holy Spirit. He dwells in us; the Church is his sanctuary and his throne. The Father is enthroned in heaven, and Jesus is at the right hand of God, and the Holy Ghost the Comforter, the life and the giver of life, dwells in, quickens and sanctifies the redeemed Church of Christ.

This heavenly strength is for, or in reference to (*εξ*), the inner man. It is no physical or material force by which the Church is to smite down tyrants and persecutors. On the contrary, all history teaches that in proportion as the Church acquires worldly succor and political greatness she loses this sin-resisting, victorious power of God in the inner man. This *inner* man is opposed to the *outward* man (2 Cor. iv. 16), to the *old* man (Rom. vi. 6; Eph. iv. 22; Col. iii. 9), to the *body of this death* (Rom. vii. 24), to the law of sin in the members (Rom. vii. 23), and to the *carneal mind* (Rom. viii. 6). It is not the mind, *nous, mens*, but the *law* of the mind. It is not the soul as distinguished from the body, nor the reasonable faculties as distinguished from the sensual and emotional, but the *spiritual nature*, the new life, the new heart which grace gives; the new man, the new creature which the Spirit of God creates in us to resist and conquer the old. This is the warfare which sin introduced into the world.



This explains the *two souls* which Socrates said were within him. The Platonists used similar language (see Fritsche on Rom. vii. 23, Meyer, Rückhert, etc.); and, I may add, similar language *must* be used wherever and so long as the mixed nature of man continues. There is always, and there must be, the inward struggle—more or less earnest, indeed, as God is more or less clearly revealed; and therefore to say, as many Germans do, that Paul proceeds on Platonic principles, is unnecessary; and with Rückhert we may call it “*eine ungeroimte Behauptung*” (“an absurd assertion”). This warfare is the very root and ground of our present state of being, and gives form and substance to the whole plan of redemption—gives, also, occasion for and direction to our prayers. No sin, and there could be no sacrifice; no fall, no redemption; no warfare in the soul, in society, in the world, and there could be no peace through the blood of the cross.

But Paul prays for strength in the inner man, not according to his or their wishes, but *according to the riches of the Father's glory*. This is the ocean from which the soul draws her supplies. “Glory” (*doxa*) is the highest form of expression in the New Testament for the pomp, splendor and majesty of the heavenly King (Matt. xix. 28; xxiv. 30; Luke ix. 26; xxi. 27; Tit. ii. 13), for the ineffable, unapproachable brilliancy in which Jehovah dwells (the *Shekinah* of the Rabbins) (2 Thess. i. 9; 2 Pet. i. 17; Rev. xv. 8; xxi. 11); it is the *Cabod* of the Hebrews, the *Megd* of the Arabs, the *Herrlichkeit* of the Germans—in fact, the highest delineation of the character of God known to man, *his glory*. This is the fountain from which the believer draws his strength. His glory, the riches of

his glory, are at your service, O reader, to give you courage in the hour of trial. Be not afraid of sin, death or the devil, the persecutions of Antichrist and all the hosts of hell. The riches of the glory of God are your strength. Sing a verse of the immortal strain of Luther which roused Germany against the pope and shook the heresiarch upon his throne :

“ Ein’ feste Burg ist unser Gott,  
 Ein Gute Wehr und Waffen;  
 Er hilft uns frei aus aller Noth  
 Die uns jetzt hat betroffen.”

Or if you are unable for this flight of faith, then I know nothing among human compositions better than the immortal ode of Horace on the “Virtuous Man” (iii. 3). One thing is certain—that if you only trust him God has made provision for your triumph over all the trials which can possibly overtake you; not, indeed, a worldly kind of victory, but strength in the inner man to make you nobly live, and, if need be, heroically die, for the cause of God and righteousness.

(2) Then he prays for the *indwelling of Christ* (ver. 17), which (notwithstanding the objections of Meyer) I take to be something different from the strengthening through the Spirit. The prayer is that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith. The faithful, believing heart is, according to Scripture, the temple of God, or rather all believers together are the temple, and individually considered they are the *living stones*. He built, ornamented and will be worshiped in it. It is this idea which is wrought out with such subtilty and beauty in Howe’s *Living Temple*, one of the deepest and most

masterly pieces of theology in the world. He is the foundation-stone upbearing, the corner-stone uniting and the top-stone completing this living temple of God. As Son of God, he is the foundation-stone; as Son of man, the highest of the finite, he is the top-stone; and as the God-Man, he is the corner-stone which unites all together. (On this indwelling in the heart as in a temple, see Eph. ii. 21, 22; John xiv. 23.)

The Greek construction in our text is the same as James iv. 5; Col. ii. 9; and the phrase *in your hearts* seems to take for granted that the opposition to the indwelling Lord is to be found in the *will*. “Ye *will* not come unto me, that ye might have life,” says Christ: “Because I have called, and ye have *refused*, therefore I will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh;” “The fool hath said in his *heart*, There is no God.” Hence the Lord makes his people *willing* in the day of his power (Ps. ex.). Christ’s throne is in the heart; he reigns Lord of the affections, and lifts over its troubled waters his peaceful hand. His rule is the dominion of love, and the rod of his power the golden sceptre of mercy. Jehovah dwelt in the temple of Jerusalem, and Jesus, the Lord and Head of his Church, dwells in the temple of redeemed and sanctified humanity.

The apostle adds, in our text, the important words *through faith*. He dwells in the heart through faith. This is the creature-side of the subject. Ye are not stocks or stones, but living, reasonable men, and therefore ye have something to do in the matter. The temple must voluntarily receive its Lord; otherwise, he cannot, and will not, enter. Except ye believe, ye shall not be established. He who believeth not the

testimony of God can never belong to the living temple. He is without the fold, and knows nothing of the good Shepherd's love. Without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. xi. 6). Nor does the work of Jesus Christ in our nature ensure the salvation of any but believers; yea, it rather darkens their prospects and deepens their condemnation (Heb. x. 29). Believe, then, brother, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. In the act of believing you receive the Saviour, and the power and the fullness of his presence in your soul are in proportion to your faith.

(3) But this prayer of the apostle includes also *knowledge*: "*That ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.*" There is knowledge for you! That is a prayer which no uninspired man could have originated. Let us for a moment contemplate its principal points. Beza, Luther and Macknight put "and" before this clause of the seventeenth verse, but the sense is good without it, and reverence for the holy word should keep us from either adding to or taking away from it.

The *being rooted and grounded in love* is a beautiful and sublime thought, uniting the ideas of vine and temple, and thereby, notwithstanding the dictum of the satirist (Horace, *Ars Poetica*, 4), enhancing the grandeur of the conception. Love—the eternal love of God to man—is the foundation on which the temple rests and the deep subsoil out of which the vine grows. This is your safety. Rest on the foundation,

abide in the Vine, for only in so doing are you safe (John xv. 6). The connection between being *rooted* and *grounded in love* and the capacity of comprehending the love of Christ is clear and beautiful, though De Wette cannot easily see it; indeed, it is not easy for a Rationalist or a Unitarian to understand anything about the love of Christ. Nevertheless, it seems reasonable that being near Christ, that remaining in the Vine and trusting on the Rock of Ages, that having daily, hourly fellowship with him, that bearing his cross, leaning on his hand and drinking from the fountains of his grace, might help us not a little in the comprehension of his love. He that loves can comprehend love; he that bears the cross can explain the mortification of the flesh; and be assured that the more firmly our faith rests on him and the more deeply we grow into the living Vine, the more fully shall we be able to comprehend the dimensions of his love. From the depths you will rise to the heights; from the purpose of the Father and the work of the Son and the Spirit, to the inheritance, the crown and the everlasting glory.

*With all saints* gives us the idea of the entire Church; there is no special reference to either apostles or angels. The meaning is, You belong to the saints of God, and one of their privileges is to comprehend the love of Christ; you stand not alone in the battle; before, behind and all around you are the saints; and my prayer is that, like them and in company with them, you may be able to comprehend what is the breadth and length and depth and height of the love of Christ. Perhaps the apostle had in his mind the sublime delineation of Job (xi. 8) as he uttered these burning words. They

refer, not to the temple of the Church (though possibly suggested by it), but to the immeasurable love of Christ.

There appears to be something more in the word "know" than in *comprehend*. He prays that they may comprehend the love of Christ, and then, as something better and higher, that they may *know* it. This refers to the saving, experimental knowledge of Christ in the soul of which the Scripture speaks so often. It is eternal life to know the Father and the Son (John xiv.), and the operations of the Father and the Spirit are to reveal the glories of the Son (Ps. cx. ; Gal. i. 16). To know the real character and love of Christ is salvation.\* They that know thy name shall put their trust in thee. It is impossible to know God, or the love of God, in the person of his Son, without loving him. The phrase *love of Christ* means the love which Christ bears to us, not the love which we bear to him, and therefore Luther's *Christum lieb haben* is false. (Comp. Gal. ii. 20 ; Rom. v. 6.) Jerome seems to make the genitive governed by the substantive instead of by the adjective, which brings out no adequate conclusion to the apostle's sentence: That ye might know the supereminent love of the knowledge of Christ. No ; it is a love that passes knowledge. Some have found inconsistency and contradiction in these words. Miserable critics, and more miserable criticism ! The apostle Paul, who for the sake of his Master suffered the loss of all things, does not choose to speak of the person, cross, love and life of his Redeemer as German philologists speak of a particle or geologists of a primitive rock. His soul is lifted upon the wings of faith

\* Dr. Carson has written a noble little work called *The Knowledge of Jesus the Best of the Sciences*.

and hope and his heart is overflowing with love. He has tasted that the Lord is gracious, and would lead you to fathom the unfathomable, to measure the boundless, to know and comprehend the incomprehensible, love of Christ. He would dwell on the same wondrous theme, leaving little critics and faultfinders to their cold and uninteresting occupation.

“Thou hidden love of God—whose height,  
Whose depth unfathom'd, no man knows—  
I see from far thy beauteous light,  
And inly sigh for thy repose.  
My heart is pained, nor can it be  
At rest till it find rest in thee.”

(4) This most ancient and cleaving love of the Lord Jesus Christ confounds all our reasonings, works in new, strange ways and produces unheard-of results. It passes knowledge that he could stoop so low and that he could raise us so high. The tremendous sacrifice of the cross surpasses all human comprehension, while, at the same time, it throws floods of light on the character of God, the nature of sin and the value of the human soul. If you are amazed at the humiliation of the Son of God, be equally amazed at the exaltation of the Son of man. Your nature, brotherman, is on the throne of the Creator in heaven, and you, as a believer, are promised a share in the kingdom of his glory (Matt. xix. 28; Luke xxii. 30; 1 Cor. vi. 2; 2 Tim. ii. 12; Rev. ii. 26, 27; iii. 21). We shall be with him, we shall be eternally in him, we shall be like him in his resurrection glory and majesty (Phil. iii. 21; 1 Cor. xv. 43; Col. iii. 4; 1 John iii. 2). This is indeed a great hope, and may well swallow up all our earthly cares.

Then, again, there was nothing in us to attract his love. We were sinners, and the law cried for vengeance; the sword of justice was made bare to smite; Satan, the adversary, roared for his prey; and death deemed his dominion universal and everlasting,—when, lo! the pardoning love of Christ overflowed our world, and all the devices of the enemy are confounded. He loved us because he loved us, and this passeth knowledge.

The mode, too, in which he manifested his love passes knowledge. The union of the divine and human natures, the mysterious bloody sacrifice of the cross, the constitution and offices of the Mediator, exhibit, as Bishop Sanderson beautifully expresses it, “such a height and depth and length and breadth in every part as naught but an infinite understanding can fathom. *So* God loved the world, but *how much* that *so* containeth no tongue can tell or wit of man can reach. It is a love incomprehensible. It swalloweth up the sense and understanding of men and angels; fitter to be admired and adored in silence than blemished with any of our weak expressions.”

(5) Then the conclusion of the prayer is remarkable: “*That ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.*” *Pleroma*, or “fullness,” is here the essential word, and it requires our diligent consideration. The *fullness* of the Gentiles (Rom. xi. 25) is the multitude or complement of the heathen nations; the Church, of which Jesus is the Head, is the *pleroma* or fullness of Him that filleth all in all (Eph. i. 23); and the fullness of God denotes the attributes, majesty and glory which make up the completeness and blessedness of his nature. Believers are to be filled with (εἰς; “with”



admissible, Rom. xvi. 6; Acts xix. 3; 2 Pet. i. 17) all the fullness of God—"mit allerlei Gottesfülle," as Luther has it; or rather *to* or *unto* the entire fullness of God, as De Wette has it—"zur ganzen Fülle Gottes;" viz., filled up until our character corresponds with his, ever approaching to, yet ever at infinite distances from, the infinite, ineffable God. It is the same, I take it, as "the grace for grace" of John i. 16, which we receive out of the fullness of Christ. The ες, "unto," shows the end and purpose of God in our glorification. The divine image is the terminus to which we shall be for ever approaching, and which shall yet stand for ever infinitely beyond and above all created glory and perfection; there will still remain room for the prayer "that ye may be filled unto all the fullness of God." Filled with his endless love, pervaded with the resurrection life of Christ, unutterable communion with God, members of the glorified Mediator and nearest to the heavenly throne (Rev. v.), there shall yet remain above and beneath and around us endless heights and depths in the fullness of God which it shall be our business in eternity to explore. All is in progress, and all tending to perfection. ONE only remains the same—God, the holy, the perfect, the immutable God, around whom the vast ALL revolves, to whom it all approaches.

The soul loses itself in these thoughts. The heart cannot endure such all-comprehending vastness, and must take refuge in the divine assurance "that we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." We share the fullness of his grace as the pledge that we shall share the fullness of his glory; perfect likeness to the burden-bearing Lamb here, and perfect likeness

to the sceptre-bearing Lord hereafter, is the highest perfection of which our nature is capable; it is to be filled with all the fullness of God.

## VII. THE DOXOLOGY.

*Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen* (ver. 20, 21).

The doxology is directed *to him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask*—viz., God; God the Father, who, through Jesus Christ the Mediator, is to be glorified and adored by the whole creation. Paul is fond of doxologies, and uses them often both in the end and in the middle of his discourse. (See Rom. xvi. 25; Phil. iv. 20; Jude 24, 25; 1 Tim. i. 17; vi. 16.) These are ascriptions of praise and honor offered up to God, or to God the Father, or to God through Jesus the Mediator (see Heb. xiii. 21; Eph. iii. 21; comp. Col. iii. 17; Rom. vii. 25), or to Christ directly (Rev. i. 6; 2 Tim. iv. 18; Rev. v. 12). The angel host on the occasion of the birth of Jesus Christ, at Bethlehem, broke out into the sublime doxology (Luke ii. 14), “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men;” and when the redemption-work is completed and the ransomed are gathered home, their sublime anthems around the throne will be to Him that loved them and washed them from their sins in his own blood (Rev. v. 9–12):

“‘Worthy the Lamb that died,’ they cry,  
‘To be exalted thus;’

‘Worthy the Lamb,’ our hearts reply,  
 ‘For he was slain for us.’”

It is not so much prayer as solemn adoration and praise; it is like the bursting forth of a stream too strong for its banks; the full heart overflows in these holy gushes of pious feeling and praise to God. I do not like the practice brought into every-day life, as it tends to make the great name of God too familiar; nor ought we to abominate anything more than the popish practice of appealing to Mary, the saints and the angels of God. This is flat, stupid idolatry, for which there is no warrant in the Holy Scriptures. We offer up our doxologies in the firm *faith* and assurance that he is able and willing to do more than we can ask or think (Rom. iv. 21; 1 Thess. v. 24). He is God, and can—he is our Father, and will—fulfill our desires and supply all our need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

The language of this noble doxology is exceedingly emphatic in the English translation, and still more so in the Greek; so that critics have been confounded by the apostle’s efforts to express the power of God in the way of a magnificent pleonasm, thus: God is able to do what we *ask*; he is able to do what we *think*; he is able to do *more* than we can ask or think; he is able to do *abundantly* more than we can ask or think; he is able to do *exceeding* abundantly more than we can ask or think.\* All this variety, without doubt, has its meaning and is surely intended to give the saints full confidence in the divine assistance and strength. He would have us to rest in his love. He

\* On the Greek construction I recommend Greenfield’s critical note on the passage as the best and clearest I have seen.

would banish from our minds the fear which hath torment, and fill us with an assurance of his presence and power which no earthly trials can shake. Therefore this sublime pleonasm.

All this is *according to the power which worketh in us*—viz., the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Eph. i. 19; iii. 16), by which we are raised to a new life and made conquerors over our spiritual enemies, which is the pledge and assurance that he can and will do exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think. Thus the believer has within him an inworking, flesh-crucifying power of God, even the Holy Ghost, the power of the Highest (Luke i. 35), whose presence in the Church is the assurance and proof that the Head is risen, and that all the promises shall in due time be accomplished. The enlargement of the Church, the overthrow of Antichrist, the binding of Satan, the advent of the Son of man, the millennial kingdom and glory, shall all be accomplished by the power of God; nor will this require anything more than a development of the immortal powers which reside in the present Church. The beginning is already made, and the end will surely come.

*Unto him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen* (ver. 21). This is the most common, and perhaps the best, translation. The Greek text will bear without violence the following translations, which the reader may choose from as he pleases: "To him be glory in the Church in Christ Jesus," and this is quite literal; "To him be glory in the Church through Christ Jesus;" "To him be glory in the Church which is in Christ Jesus;" "To him be glory by the Church for Christ Jesus."

That the Greek  $\epsilon\nu$ , "in," often signifies the same as  $\delta\iota\alpha$ , "through" (with a genitive), is proved by Matt. ix. 34; Acts iv. 9; 1 Cor. xv. 22; Gal. iii. 8; Acts iii. 25; Heb. i. 1; 1 John v. 11. I take it in this sense: "Glory be to God in the Church *through* Jesus Christ." The place of his glory is the Church, and the person through whom he receives it is Christ, and the time it continues is throughout all ages, world without end.

## CHAPTER VIII.

I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.  
—EPHESIANS iv. 1-16.

THIS chapter commences the more practical part of the Epistle, and with great tact leads us from the doctrines to the duties—not, indeed, as if the division between doctrinal and practical was marked and distinct, so that only doctrines could be found here and only duties there. This is never the case in the writings of the

New Testament, and in this, as in all things, we may easily trace the wisdom of God. We do not find, as in confessions of faith and articles of religion, one chapter on God, and another on the state of man; one on the Trinity, and another on the divine unity; one on faith, and another on works, etc. In the Bible doctrine is never separated from life, faith from practice. The divine motives are always made the ground on which the believer's holy living rests. Thus the incarnation of the Son of God is the motive and example of humility (Phil. ii. 5-8); his exaltation is the motive to heavenly-mindedness (Col. iii. 1-6); his coming in glory is the motive to prayer, watchfulness and many other Christian duties (1 Pet. iv. 1-8, 13; 2 Pet. i. 11; iii. 10); and so we may say of all the doctrines of the gospel. They occur in the Scriptures where they are required for the comfort, warning or encouragement of the saints. Nevertheless, the latter parts of Paul's Epistles are generally the more practical, and the former the more doctrinal.

This gives force to the *therefore* of the first verse: Seeing that such is the glorious purpose of God in the saints (iii. 10, 11), and that such are the immeasurable dimensions of his love (iii. 17, 18), therefore I, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called.

Many connect the words *in the Lord* with *beseech*, and translate thus: "I, the prisoner, beseech you in the Lord," and refer to 1 Thess. iv. 1 and Eph. iv. 17 as examples of similar construction; but the great majority of interpreters connect *prisoner* with *in the Lord*, as our translation does, and as its position in the text seems to require. Thus we have *the brother in the*

*Lord* (Phil. i. 14), *a man in Christ* (2 Cor. xii. 2), *fellow-servant in the Lord* (Col. iv. 7), and many other similar expressions in the New Testament. (See 1 Thess. v. 12; Eph. v. 8.) *In the Lord* is connected with verbs in the following passages: Rom. xvi. 2, 22; 1 Cor. i. 31; vii. 39; Eph. iv. 17; vi. 1; Phil. ii. 19; iii. 1; Col. iii. 18; iv. 17; 1 Thess. iii. 9; iv. 1; 2 Thess. iii. 4.

What, then, is the meaning of the phrase "prisoner in the Lord"? Our translators take it in the sense of a genitive, and render it *the prisoner of the Lord*. Bloomfield says *en* is put for the Greek *dia*, "through," with a genitive, in this signification, *in the cause of*: I am a prisoner in *the Lord's cause*; but that great author only gives us examples where *dia*, "through," with a genitive, signifies *in the cause of*. On the contrary, most interpreters, from Chrysostom to the present time, take it in the sense of *dia* with an accusative, in the sense *I am a prisoner for the Lord's sake*; and those who take *in the Lord* for a genitive connect it with *beseech*, thus: "I, the prisoner, beseech you by the Lord," etc. I confess I can, in this passage, see no difference between *in the Lord* and *for the Lord's sake* (De Wette thinks he does), or I may add the genitive, *of the Lord*. In Greek, as in English, the three forms are essentially the same: *I am the prisoner in the Lord*, *I am the prisoner of the Lord* and *I am a prisoner for the Lord's sake*. The meaning in all cases is this: I suffer as a Christian, and not as a man; I am imprisoned for declaring the truth of Christ, and not for any crime against the laws of my country. Hence, the fine Greek phrase for Christians is "*those in Christ*" (Gal. i. 22; 2 Cor. xii. 2; 1 Pet. v. 14; and others). I believe, indeed, that



the phrase *in the Lord* has often a far deeper meaning than either *through the Lord* or *for the Lord's sake* (Winer, *Gram.* 333), and therefore *the life in God* is much more than *the life for God*; but I do not admit the conclusion of some grammarians that the Greek *en* with a dative has never the sense of *dia* with either a genitive or an accusative.

From all this, then, we understand something of the deep signification of *being in Christ* or *walking in Christ* or *living in God*—of being branches of the Vine, stones of the Temple and having our life hidden with Christ in God (Col. iii. 1-6). These all denote union with him by faith and relate to the oneness which grace has effected between the believing soul and God. This living, indissoluble union is more necessary, and also more apparent, in times of persecution, when the Church, like Paul, is called upon to follow her Lord to the prison, the inquisition or the stake. Then it is a great matter to be not merely *the prisoner*, but the *prisoner of the Lord*. This is the ground of Paul's exhortation: I am the Lord's apostle, called by himself, proved by suffering, by patience, by signs and wonders (2 Cor. xii. 12; Rom. xv. 19), and now his prisoner; and so, as *such*, I exhort you to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called.

Let us now take up the different parts of this apostolic exhortation, giving a word or two upon each.

#### I. THE VOCATION OR CALLING.

*I beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love* (ver. 1, 2).

What is the *klesis*, "vocation" or "calling," of which the Scripture speaks so often? Take the following hints:

It is the *calling of God* (Rom. xi. 29; Phil. iii. 14; comp. 2 Thess. i. 11; 2 Tim. i. 9; Heb. iii. 1; 2 Pet. i. 10; Eph. i. 18), because it is God himself who calls us from darkness to light, and from the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of his dear Son. It is a *high calling* (Phil. iii. 14), for the prize attached to it is eternal life. It is a *holy calling* (2 Tim. i. 9), because the end and purpose of it (at least on earth) is holiness—viz., the restoration of the image of God in the soul. It is a *heavenly calling* (Heb. iii. 1), for it comes from and draws us to heaven.

The *hope of our calling* (Eph. iv. 4) is the hope which those called by God to serve him may cherish. It belongs to the brethren alone and proceeds entirely from God (1 Cor. i. 26). This is what our fathers termed *effectual calling*, and it occupies a prominent place in all our systems of theology. The doctrine is based upon or takes for granted the following principles: (1) That the human race is fallen and needs to be restored to God; (2) That even this fallen and redeemed race cannot of itself return to God, but needs the assistance of a divine call; (3) That the election and the calling are coextensive; (4) That therefore the salvation of the Church is, in its origin, means and end, to be ascribed to the pure and sovereign will of God.

Our walk should be worthy of this vocation. There ought to be some relation between our conduct and our hopes, between our character and the promised reward. If his love has opened up to us glorious and immortal hopes, should not our service correspond to them?

Worthy of his calling? It is a great, high, noble principle. It is a rule of life which lifts us from the dust and gives us the position, hopes and fears of immortal creatures. The devout old dreamer states, in his *Grace Abounding*, that often after his conversion he found it as difficult to draw his heart and affections from heaven and heavenly things as formerly it was to get them there. If we can judge of Rutherford by his letters, we may believe that, in prison or out of it, his heart was in constant fellowship with God, his life hidden with Christ in God. Dr. Dwight says there is no limit to the attainments in the divine life; so that we may be always pressing onward and upward in our approaches to God. To have a great and noble aim is a guarantee against mean and dishonorable conduct, and certainly the first requisite of holy living is the high and controlling hope of our calling. We are his, we live in him, we are going to him, we shall see him as he is and be like him in his glory. These hopes fill and satisfy the soul, while they guide our efforts into the honorable paths of holiness and virtue. The Orientals say, "The servant of a king is a king," to express the idea that greatness is expansive; and the Scripture assures us that by beholding the Son of God we are changed into his image from glory to glory (2 Cor. iii. 18; 1 John iii. 3, 4).\*

\* The genitive of attraction in the above verse is resolved variously by philologists. De Wette says it is put for the accusative, and Winer for the dative (*Gram.* §24). On this remarkable principle of construction, see the following passages: Luke ii. 20; John ii. 22; Acts iii. 21, 25; x. 39; vii. 17; xx. 10; James ii. 5; 1 Pet. iv. 11; John xv. 20; xxi. 10; Luke v. 9; Eph. ii. 5; Matt. xviii. 19; 2 Cor. i. 4; Tit. iii. 6; Rev. xviii. 5, 6. (Comp. the Septuagint, Zech. iii. 11.) For the history of the principle of attraction and its occurrence in classical authors, see Buttmann, Bernhardt, Winer and Stuart.

Observe, now, how the apostle defines this worthy walk according to our calling: "*With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love.*" *Lowliness* is the same as "lowliness of mind" (Phil. ii. 3); "humbleness of mind" (Col. iii. 12); "humility" (1 Pet. v. 5; Col. ii. 18, 23); in a bad sense, "humility of mind" (Acts xx. 19). It is opposed to "vainglory" (Phil. ii. 3; comp. Gal. v. 26) and "the minding high things" (Rom. xii. 16). The word, therefore, denotes the Christian duty of thinking modestly of ourselves, whatever be our character, gifts or attainments, and it is applied only to men or to sinners (I mean the Greek word), and never to God or to Christ, in the Holy Scriptures. *Meekness* is no attribute of God; the word is only once applied to Christ (2 Cor. x. 1), and in all other cases to men (1 Cor. iv. 21; Gal. v. 23; vi. 1; Eph. iv. 2; Col. iii. 12; 1 Tim. vi. 11; 2 Tim. ii. 25; Tit. iii. 2). *Meekness* shows the mode of a Christian's walk, whether in suffering or in active service for Christ. This is the kind, gentle, loving spirit which seeks to do difficult duties and rough work without giving offence, which bears all and suffers all like a lamb, without reproaches or murmurings. It is easily distinguished from *lowliness*, as well as from the following *long-suffering*. This latter attribute refers to the noble position of a person who has just cause for anger, but is not angry. It approaches forgiveness, but yet is quite distinct. God is long-suffering to the world; he forgives only the believer on his Son. He is long-suffering (Rom. ii. 4; ix. 22; 1 Pet. iii. 20). So is applied the Hebrew phrase "long of countenance" (Prov. xxv. 15; Jer. xv. 15). God bears with his sinful creatures in the way of

long-suffering love, and thereby gives them time for repentance. So, says Paul, ye should walk worthy of his calling in this respect also. Be like God in your long-suffering, and treat your fellow-creatures as he treats you.

It is not difficult to judge of our standing as Christians by these characteristics. Have you proud thoughts of yourself? Are you wounding the spirit of meekness in your daily life? Are you wrathful, hasty, proud, overbearing? Then either you have never been called of God or you are walking unworthy of your vocation.

## II. THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT.

We come now to the *unity of the Spirit* (ver. 3), which we are endeavoring to keep. This is the unity which the Holy Spirit works in the members of Christ. He draws them all to the cross as their centre, and while they behold the divine Sufferer he softens their hearts into streams of tender love and fills them all with the same unquenchable desire to forsake all and follow him. The whole inner man is revolutionized, the whole heart touched and conquered, and a sublime, overpowering, new affection has laid an arrest upon all the processes of the soul's evil conditions. There is unity of aim, there is unity of object, there is unity in self-sacrificing love:

“Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were an offering far too small:  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my heart, my life, my all.”

This unity of the Spirit is not, as some think, the unity of the Church, for that comes afterward, under

*the one body*; nor is it the unity of the person of the Holy Ghost. It is rather the oneness of heart and feeling which the Spirit works in all believers, whatever be their position, color or country. The Holy Ghost is the common Spirit of the Father and the Son, possessed by both, sent by both and bearing witness to both (John xiv. 16, 26; xv. 26; xvi. 7, 14). Thus the Father and the Son are one, for they possess a common spirit; and in the same manner many persons on earth may be one when they all possess the same spirit. This explains the solemn prayer of Christ (John xvii. 21): "That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they all may be one in us."

We are to keep this unity in the *bond of peace*. Bengel says: "*Vinculum, quo pax retinetur, est ipse amor*" ("The bond of peace is love"). It may be so, but many commentators take the bond of peace to be peace itself, as the means of preserving unity. We should imbibe a peaceful, conciliating spirit, and this will be the best means of promoting and extending unity. As much as in you lies, live peaceably with all men. Jesus is the Prince of peace; his kingdom is a kingdom of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. He came and preached peace; his life was the example of peace; his death was the seal of peace; he is our peace; his birth gave us the song of peace; on Olivet he gave us the legacy of peace; and his ascension to the right hand of God is the proof that peace is concluded between God and man. Avoid all divisions and sectarian feelings; keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. The other view, which makes love the bond of peace, is clearer, and

seems to be supported by Col. iii. 14, where love is said to be the bond of perfectness. It is no doubt allowable, however, with Luther, De Wette, Campbell and others, to translate "through the bond of peace," which has the great advantage of being unambiguous. On the whole, the two interpretations nearly meet, for the quiet, peaceable spirit which binds all together (Ovid, *Met.* i. 25; see Greenfield and Wetstein) is not very different from the charity which edifieth (1 Cor. viii. 1) or the love which covers a multitude of sins.

### III. THERE IS ONE BODY.

*Body* is no doubt used here as the proper designation for the Church of Christ, which is spiritually as much one as is the human body naturally: the members are many, the body is one (Rom. xii. 5). (See 1 Cor. x. 17; xii. 13, 27; Eph. i. 23; ii. 16; Col. ii. 17.) So the Church is compared to the vine, the bride, the temple, the garden, the house, etc., all denoting the various relations between Jesus and his Church, and all containing the great idea of unity. She requires the care of the Husbandman; he must plant, prune and fructify all the various members; and hence the relation: "I am the vine, and ye are the branches." She is the bride, the second Eve for the second Adam, taken out of his bleeding side and destined to share with him the dominion of the new paradisiacal earth (Rev. v. 10; xxi. 1, 27; 2 Pet. iii. 13; Isa. lxy. 17; lxvi. 22). He has taken our nature, *sarx*, "flesh" (John i. 14); *soma*, "a body" (Heb. x. 5); flesh and blood (Heb. ii. 14); a soul (Acts ii. 27; Ps. xvi. 10); spirit, *pneuma* (Luke xxiii. 46). All these show the reality of the incarnation and lay the foundation for the expressive sym-

bol of his Church, "one body." There is one body, the Church, which is the fullness of Him that filleth all in all. But, you say, what is the unity of this body? I answer, The Church throughout the whole world is one in its origin, from Jesus Christ and his apostles; one in holding the true saving doctrines of grace; one in having regular ordinances and a gospel ministry; one as to essential inward life, though very varied as to time, place, circumstances and external form.

Hence we may draw the following conclusions:

(1) That the Church of Jesus Christ is not limited to any age or nation, nor necessarily defined by any system of ritualism or external form of government. There may be, and always have been, different forms of organization in the various branches of the Church—some more, others less, perfect—but these varieties are not more than may be, and are, found in the members of the same body, while yet the whole is pervaded by the same life—the very same immortal, imperishable life, though often not in the same force and fullness in all the members. Nor does this exclude corrupt churches from the communion of the faithful. The papacy, or the Romish Church, for example, is not unlike the body of Job, smitten by the devil with sore boils from the sole of the foot unto the crown, and the manifest duty of the pope and the cardinals is to take a potsherd and scrape themselves and sit down among the ashes (Job ii. 7, 8). Nor are the churches of England, Scotland and Germany without certain warts and wrinkles which require to be rubbed off in the process of purification. There is life in all of them, and hence true believers, saints, martyrs and men in whom the apostolic ages might have gloried have been found in them all. These



scattered saints, and not the outward corporations, form the true holy catholic and apostolic Church of Christ founded upon the Rock of ages, redeemed by the sacrifice of the cross and full of the hopes of life and immortality. This is the congregation of faithful men, the Church of the living God, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail, nor the counsels of the ungodly prosper.

(2) It is the duty of Christians to cherish the spirit of unity and join together in the public exercises of religion. (See the following scriptures: Heb. x. 25; 1 Pet. iii. 8; Phil. ii. 2; i. 27; iii. 16; John xiii. 34; xvii. 20-22.) We ought to look upon ourselves as members of the one glorious Church of God from the beginning—the body of Christ—members of that immortal corporation which is chartered against destruction by the promises of Jehovah. This is our safety and our strength. We are not alone in our pilgrimage, but march on toward eternity surrounded by all the great and good upon the earth and preceded by prophets, apostles and the glorious army of the martyrs. Hence the *divisive, separating* spirit is a mark of the flesh (Jude 19), while *being separated* and put out of the synagogue for righteousness' sake is a sign of blessing (Luke vi. 22).

(3) Hence *schism* is a great sin and ought to be avoided by Christians. By schism I mean voluntary separation from a true branch of the Church of Christ. In the New Testament *schism* is never used in the ecclesiastical sense of separation from the Church, but of divisions and factions in it. In Matt. ix. 16 it is a "rent;" in all other passages it is rendered "division," except 1 Cor. xii. 25, where it might also be rendered

“division.” Thus the moderates and the evangelicals in the Church of Scotland were schismatics, and in the English Church, the Calvinists, Arminians and papists; the Broad Church, the Low Church, the High Church and the high and dry are all the *schismata* of the primitive Church. *Schism* has no necessary connection with religious opinions. Any kind of division in the Church is schism. *Heresy* is used, in most cases, in the same sense; thus “heresies,” in 1 Cor. xi. 19, is equivalent to “schism” in verse 18; in Gal. v. 20 heresies are reckoned among the works of the flesh; in 2 Pet. ii. 1 we have the only clear, distinct example in the New Testament of the word *heresy* being applied to false doctrines. Some denied the Lord that bought them, and that is called a damnable heresy. It was this text, no doubt, which finally determined the ecclesiastical application of the word to its present ecclesiastical usage. Thus, contrary to the common habit of both classical and New-Testament Greek, *schism* came to denote sects and *heresy* false doctrines. The word *heresies* was the common name for the different philosophical sects, as the Stoics, the Epicureans, the Ionians, etc. (Epictet., ii. 19; Diodor. Sic., 2, 29). Just so the scribes, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Essenes, the Christians (Acts xxviii. 22), were so many heresies in the Jewish Church. In the same way the different orders in the popish apostasy, the Jesuits, the Carmelites, the Franciscans, etc., are classes of well-regulated heretics; the Whigs, Tories, Puseyites and evangelicals are all heretics in the ordinary Scripture sense of the word. In the Church there should be nothing of this. Believers should be all of one mind in the Lord. (See 1 Cor. i. 10; Rom. xvi. 17, 18; 1 Cor. v. 11; Heb. xiii. 17; 1

John ii. 19, 20.) The Fathers of the first ages pour forth the whole vehemence of their invective against separation from the visible Church; the English divines follow in their footsteps (Palmer, *Church*. i. 45), and the Dissenters, such as Baxter and Owen, maintain the same principles. Baxter (*Cure of Church Division*) says, "He that is out of the Church is without the teaching, the holy worship, the prayers and the discipline of the Church, and is out of the way where the Spirit doth come, and out of the society which Christ is specially related to, for he is the Saviour of the body; and if we *leave* his hospital, we cannot expect the presence and help of the Physician. Nor will he be a pilot to them who *forsake* his ship, nor a captain to them who *separate* from his army. Out of this ark there is nothing but a deluge and no place of rest or safety for the soul." Calvin uses still stronger language, and it would be easy to multiply such quotations from the Reformers to almost any extent.

(4) The *causes* of separation from a Church must be sought in many directions. The Reformers, in general, did not separate from the churches which they sought to reform. Luther was excommunicated; the Puritans were expelled by severe and cruel decrees concerning things indifferent; the English and German nations are not schismatics in not submitting to the iniquitous decrees of the Council of Trent. Generally speaking, the various sects and parties in the Christian Church have arisen from the same cause—oppression, or, in some cases, church discipline. They must indeed be very serious which can justify a man in voluntarily separating from the Church in which Providence has placed him. Of course no man should conceal the

truth, be the consequences what they may. If I were a priest in the Church of Rome and believed in the doctrines of *free grace*, I would not leave that communion. I would tell my case to the bishop, show him the grounds of my faith and state my determination to abide by them. If I gained him for the truth, well; if not, I would have done my duty; but at all hazards I would preach the gospel to the people of my charge, and if he then separated me from my people it would be persecution for righteousness' sake and I might expect the Lord's blessing: "Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven" (Luke vi. 22, 23). On the other hand, hear what Jude says of the mockers of the last days: "These be they who separate themselves, sensual, not having the Spirit" (Jude 19). So great is the difference between *separating* and *being separated*. The first is a sign of carnality, and the second has great reward in heaven. If, indeed, the pastors of a Church have become false teachers and lying prophets, you are not bound to hear them. No man is, or can be, bound to hear error, and in that case separation is not schism.

(5) It is manifest that the various original churches which sprang up after the resurrection of Christ and the outpouring of the Spirit had not all the same rites, forms and ceremonies. There was, therefore, no absolute unity as to the mode of public worship. The Scripture does not hint, much less assert, that the whole Church of God is to be and remain for ever under the guidance of one visible and infallible head

whose dwelling-place is to be Rome, the centre of heathen and Christian superstition. Christendom, according to the New Testament, is not to consist of one universal, world-embracing monarchy with Rome for its centre and the pope for its head, but of many various and differently constructed monarchies and republics, all dwelling in peace and harmony under the one sovereign and universal Head in heaven. The twelve apostles founded the churches of the primitive ages, and no one church sought or claimed any supremacy over the rest. Their rivalry was that of love and good works, of apostolic earnestness and unconquerable zeal. They were all sister-churches, equal, beautiful, shining like stars in the right hand of Him who walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks (Rev. i. 13). The outward pressure of persecution and the promises of their risen Master kept them in unity of faith and love. They found it necessary to keep near their Lord, and in being so they were near one another.

(6) There is, in my opinion, as much unity in the Church of Christ now as ever there was since the apostolic age. This may seem a strange assertion, but it is nevertheless true. Consider, first of all, we have no so violent, so various and so monstrously erroneous sects as existed in the early ages of the Church. Again, in the dark, barbarous ages ignorance and stupidity prevented the nations from being able to exercise any reasonable, intelligible faith at all; but when there was *thought*, there was variety in the same proportion, and much in the same way, as at the present time. Under the gospel system there were, and there are, all varieties of opinion. The different orders held different doctrines. No two Protestant churches ever hated each other so

violently as did the Jesuits and the Jansenists, the Augustinians and the Dominicans. Popes excommunicated popes; councils, councils; nations, nations; Arians, Socinians and Pelagians found refuge under the skirts of the imperial harlot (Rev. xvii. 5). The modern German Catholics were all within her; France was lying quietly in her capacious bosom; while the philosophers and encyclopædists were filling the minds of the masses with the deadliest infidel poison. I know some devout Roman Catholics who do not believe in a future state; and, in general, it may be held as a truth that the virulence of error and heresy increases in proportion to the necessity of silence and concealment. As there is more moral feeling, so is there probably more unity of faith, in England than in Italy. It is well known that the Jesuits often maintained very free opinions on the most sacred subjects; and for Roman Catholics in general there seems to be absolutely necessary no article of faith but the headship of the pope. Admit this, and hold what you like besides. The pope offered to consecrate the English Liturgy and receive the Reformed Protestant Church of England into his paternal embrace if he were only recognized as the head of the Church. On the same principle, he has received all the sects of the East, who still hold their own doctrines and follow their own ritual. I repeat it, then, there is as much unity now in the popish Church as ever there was; and the Protestant churches of England, Scotland, France, Germany, Sweden and America are as united in faith and love and brotherly affection as were the churches of the second, third and fourth centuries.

## IV. ONE SPIRIT.

There is one body and *one Spirit*, says the apostle—viz., the Holy Ghost, the Sanctifier and Comforter. The body is *one*, with many members; so the Spirit that forms and quickens them is also *one*. The unity of God, the unity of the Mediator, the unity of the Spirit and the unity of the Church all stand upon the same foundation in the word of God—one God, one Mediator, one Lifegiver and one body, the Church. We have here to do with the *one Spirit*. This is the Spirit of God (Gen. i. 2; Matt. iii. 16); the Spirit of the Father (Matt. x. 20); the Spirit of Jehovah (Gen. vi. 3); the Spirit of Christ (Rom. viii. 9; Gal. iv. 6; Phil. i. 19); the Spirit of adoption, who fills us with love to God and makes us cry, “Abba, Father” (Gal. iv. 4-7; 2 Tim. i. 7); the Spirit of grace, who leads us to Emmanuel (Heb. x. 29; ii. 3, 4; vi. 4, 5; Rom. xii. 6; 1 Cor. xii. 13); the Spirit of verity, to lead us into all truth (John xiv. 17; xv. 26; xvi. 13); the Spirit of promise, because he was promised to the fathers and poured out upon the Church after the ascension of Christ (Eph. i. 13; Acts i. 4; ii. 33; Joel ii. 28; Luke xxiv. 49). He is eternal (Heb. ix. 14), holy (Rom. i. 4), omnipresent (Ps. cxxxix. 7), omniscient (1 Cor. ii. 10). He spake by the prophets (Neh. ix. 30; Acts vii. 51; 1 Pet. i. 11; 2 Pet. i. 21); he is the Author of miracles and all supernatural gifts in the Church (Matt. xii. 28; Rom. xv. 19; Acts ii. 4-14; Heb. ii. 4; 1 Cor. xii. 3-12). If Jesus be the image of God for the eye, the Holy Ghost is the Linguist to utter forth in all languages the wonderful works of God. He is, in fact, described in Scripture

with the names, attributes and perfections of God. The constant faith of the whole Church, in all nations and in all ages, has been in the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost as the one true and eternal God, the Creator, Redeemer and Governor of the world.

There is one Spirit and—

#### V. ONE HOPE OF YOUR CALLING.

We have already spoken of the *calling* (ver. 1), and now we have only to consider the *hope* which belongs to it. But what is the meaning of being called *in one hope* of your calling?

The Greek preposition  $\epsilon\nu$ , which is the origin of our “in,” and in many cases answers to it, is thus explained by Bengel: “It denotes *indolem rei*, the nature of the thing referred to.” Thus we are called in peace, in holiness, in the hope of our calling. Macknight gives it seventeen different meanings, with abundant proofs for each, and our translators have given it nearly as many. I need not refer to passages. Perhaps the best translation in this verse is *unto*: “Ye are called by the gospel unto the one great hope of your calling in Christ Jesus;” and in this sense I take it.

What, then, is this hope, this one hope, unto which we are called? I answer thus: God, who knows what is in man, has suited his world and his word to our material and spiritual conditions. We are creatures of hope as well as of sense and memory. The future, distant and near, as seen in the divine word, presents to the eye of man a thousand varieties of things hoped for, like innumerable stars, some dimmer, some brighter, shining through the darkness of a cloudy sky. We have the hope of the *resurrection*—the resurrection of the just.



the first resurrection, which seems to be the privilege of the saints, and therefore a hope (Acts xxviii. 20; 1 Cor. xv. 23); they that are Christ's (Luke xx. 36); the sons of God (Rev. xx. 5). (Comp. 1 Thess. iv. 14; Rom. viii. 23; Luke xiv. 14.) We have the hope of *righteousness* (Gal. v. 5) when the work is done; the hope of the gospel (Col. i. 23); the hope of glory (Col. i. 27) to strengthen our fainting spirits. It is a hidden hope, laid up for us in heaven—a hope that shall never make ashamed; the hope of being with and like Christ in his glorious kingdom for ever. All these aspirations and varieties seem to be united in the one great hope which has animated the Church from the beginning—the hope of the coming and kingdom of Jesus Christ, which is therefore called, by way of eminence, the blessed hope (Tit. ii. 13). I think, therefore, that this is the one hope of our calling and includes all the others. The Jews had the coming of Christ in the flesh as their great national hope, and we Christians look for his coming in glory as the substance of things hoped for. This is the hope of the New Testament as distinguished from that of the Old, and the Gospels and Epistles are full of it. It animated the early Christians in their faithful contendings, it is embodied in the Lord's Prayer, it is the cry of the widowed Church and the groaning creation: Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly! It is therefore the one hope; and, as we are called to a kingdom, to be kings and priests unto God and our Father, it is the one hope of our *calling*. That great event is connected with many others, to which it gives character and significance, as it is closely connected with all the feelings of the mind—the hopes and fears, the duties and neglects

of duty, of which our Christian experience is made up.

The cross and the crown, the coming of Christ in the flesh and his coming in glory, being the historical and the prophetic, and so the proper food for memory and hope, are the two centres of the divine word and the divine administration around which all the systems of grace and providence revolve. There is one faith in the dying Lamb, and one hope in the coming King. We behold the cross, and with tears of penitence the chains of sin dissolve in divine mercy; while at the same moment our humble but immortal hopes begin to cluster around the coming King of glory, without whom we cannot do any longer, whom it will be our delight to glorify and adore in the sanctuary above, when faith and hope shall be swallowed up in the fruition of eternal love.

## VI. THE LORDSHIP OF JESUS.

We come now to the *lordship of Jesus*: there is *one Lord*. Here we remark—

(1) That the title Lord (in Greek, *Κυριος*), when taken in a solemn religious sense, always denotes the one living and eternal God, the Creator and Ruler of the world (Matt. i. 22; Luke i. 6, 28; Acts vii. 33; Heb. viii. 2, 10; James iv. 15); nor does the absence of the article alter the sense in the least degree (Matt. xxvii. 10; Mark xiii. 20; Luke i. 58; Acts vii. 49; Rom. iv. 8; Heb. vii. 21; 1 Pet. i. 25). In the Septuagint it is used throughout for the great unutterable name “Jehovah,” the highest and holiest known to the Hebrew nation. This is the common name of Jesus in the New Testament, and seems naturally to identify him with the God of Israel. It is applied to him with and without

the article in its highest and most unqualified acceptation (Eph. i. 22; Rom. x. 12; ix. 5; 2 Cor. iii. 16, 17, 18; Eph. v. 10; Col. iii. 23; 2 Thess. iii. 1, 5; 2 Tim. iv. 8; James v. 7), and consequently presents him to our faith as the object of our veneration and love. He is our Lord. He is one with the Father, and along with him the proper object of religious worship. The Church worships him (1 Cor. i. 2); Stephen, when dying and full of the Holy Ghost, adored him (Acts vii. 59, 60): the hosts of heaven—holy angels and redeemed men—worship him (Rev. v. 11-14) with songs of praise:

“ ‘Worthy the Lamb that died,’ they cry,  
 ‘To be exalted thus:’  
 ‘Worthy the Lamb,’ let us reply,  
 ‘For he was slain for us.’ ”

*Lordship* denotes three things—possession, power and glory—and they all meet in him. We are his; the world, the sun, moon and stars, the created universe, is his property (Col. i. 16). All power in heaven and on earth is in his hand, and he is surrounded by the pomp and majesty of the heavenly throne. He is Lord of all (Acts x. 36).

(2) But how is he the *one Lord*? Answer: He is not the only Lord, in opposition to the Father or the Holy Spirit, for these are also in Scripture called Lord, and to the three divine Persons all names and attributes equally belong.\* But he is the *one Lord*, owing to his special relations to the Church and in opposition to the various false religions of the world. There are many systems of worship, many rulers of the darkness of this world, but to us there is *one Lord* Jesus Christ,

\* *Horæ Solitariae* i. 7.

and his authority is all in all. There is no other name but his given under heaven whereby we can be saved; he is the one living Head of the Church, and the only Mediator between God and man. There is salvation in no other; he alone died for us, and he is the only Advocate and Mediator at the right hand of God; and hence we can say with Paul, "*There is one Lord*"—one from the first of time to the last; for in creation, in providence and in redemption he is the Lord, the Worker, the Mediator, the Agent of Jehovah in bringing his purposes into outward form and reality. He is the Lord, the one Lord, Head and Executor of the covenants with Adam, Noah, Abraham and Moses, as well as of the new covenant which is called by his name. In all time, in all space, in all manifestations of the Deity, of every kind and degree, he is the one Lord, the Word, the Worker, the Revealer, through whom the ineffable Jehovah reveals to the universe something of his glory.

(3) But we may surely ask, in passing, What is the *nature of his lordship*? How does his rule affect us? Is he actually ruling now? We must limit our answer to such questions altogether to the Scripture. Reason and imagination do not reach these themes. We see something of the nature of his rule in the great principle of his Headship. He is the Church's Head (Eph. iv. 13-16). He is the Head of the human race, the second Adam (1 Cor. xi. 3). The angels are made subject to him (1 Pet. iii. 22). He is Head and Ruler over the whole universe (Eph. i. 22), and that not simply as God, but as God-Man and Mediator (Matt. xxvii. 18); so that the nature of man is glorified beyond all conception, and the divine idea of making

man the royal family of heaven, the regnant form of creature-being, is coming into actual accomplishment.

Here is dignity for you, O brother-man! Look up to the throne of God. The angels are round about it, but your nature is on it. Why talk of the dignity of man and point us to Newton and Milton and Locke, to the Alexanders, the Cæsars, and such-like conquerors and heroes? Honor to the brave, wherever they are! But let us open the eye of faith and contemplate humanity in its full-orbed glory as it is predestinated to be, in the person of Jesus Christ. I do not wonder that many should be inclined to doubt the doctrines of incarnation, atonement and headship, for they are altogether unlike what men would originate. They are too large, too deep, too big, for our dwarfish conceptions. We are of the earth, earthy; these are of heaven, heavenly. God himself in my nature! Humanity taken up into Godhead and made the medium of the Creator's working! It is no mere escape from damnation. Not only is sin expiated and Satan foiled and the gates of hell closed, but I am carried away into the glories of the skies, into the throne of the universe, into the very bosom of God. The lowest has become the highest, the receiver has become the giver, the Burden-Bearer the Sceptre-Bearer, the lowly Man of sorrows the life-quickening God. In Jesus I share all this. In his birth I was born, in his death I have died, in his grave I was buried, in his resurrection I rose, in his ascension I ascended, and in his advent I shall come with him. This is the power of faith. Not as a single isolated individual, but as the Head and Representative of his Church, and of humanity generally, did he live, die and rise again,

and therefore all his victories and all his glories are ours by faith, and we shall surely, when the time comes, share the splendors of his reign. This is the true dignity of manhood; this is the glory of the human race. Jesus is Lord, he is the Lord of heaven and earth, and yet he is my brother. Keep this steadily in view, and all the noise made by Rénan, Schenkel and the English Epicurean crew will appear nothing better than the grunting of the Gadarene swine in their race to the deep.

#### VII. ONE FAITH.

One and the same faith. The Jews and the Gentiles are united in one faith and formed into the one Church of God; we were formerly divided, but now we are united. There is proclaimed a new principle of union which is to heal all divisions and unite all nations, and that principle is *faith*. The bond and the free are to meet, the slave and his master, the conquered and the conqueror, the black man and the white man, the red man and the mulatto; all tongues and nations and races are to be built up into the great temple of God, and the *cement* that unites them all is *faith*. They are to be one vine, and faith is the sap that vivifies it: they are to be one body, and the blood that circulates through all its members is *faith*; they are to be one house, a habitation of God through the Spirit, and *faith* is the medium of their adoption, as it is written: "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." Then, again, the great objects of our faith are the same, and the hopes which it produces in all nations and ages are essentially one. The subtle distinctions and forms of words which in after-ages divided and distracted the Church were unneeded and

unknown. The early Christians drank the refreshing streams at the fountain-head, and were not, like us, overwhelmed with the bitter waters of division and formality. They loved Him who was their all, even Jesus, and in the fellowship of his love they felt themselves one in faith and hope and charity.

Faith is not the assent of the mind to a form of sound words, however true and beautiful, but the resting of the soul upon the work and person of Christ. The firm defenders of an orthodox creed may be unbelievers, knowing nothing of the *faith* whose forms they defend. Many, on the other hand, have a firm, victorious faith who have no forms at all. "I cannot argue for him, but I can die for him," said a poor woman whom Dr. Chalmers had thought too ignorant to be admitted to the Lord's Supper.

There may also be *oneness* of faith in the midst of a great variety of sentiments and opinions, and there may be an utter absence of faith in the midst of stringent and ritual uniformity. In all the Protestant churches and nations there is substantial unity of faith, as was before observed, even if we take faith in the sense of symbolical *credos* or external dogmatical articles. They all admit the doctrines of the three œcumenical councils, and most of them have embodied the three creeds in the constitution of the national churches. Even the papists have not been able to corrupt and pervert these noble monuments of antiquity. These three creeds, the Apostles' (so called), the Nicene and the Athanasian, are, with few exceptions, the received symbolical faith of Christendom, and some of the nations and churches which do not formally admit them are the most resolute

defenders of their general doctrines. Read these venerable documents, and you have the objective faith of the Christian world. So that, notwithstanding all our divisions, national and ecclesiastical, three hundred millions of the human race can, with the apostle, say, We have *one faith*.

Thus we can say the fountain of our faith is one—the Bible; the agent of our faith is one—the Holy Spirit; and the great principles of the three creeds are admitted and defended by all Christians.

#### VIII. ONE BAPTISM.

*One baptism* also belongs to these celebrated unities of the apostle. This is the holy rite by which we are admitted into the Church of Christ, and it remains the same in substance among all Christians as it was at the beginning; for the papists themselves admit their *additions* to be mainly useful in clothing the simple rite with greater majesty and splendor. The form is given in the New Testament, and cannot be altered without vitiating the whole institution. It must be in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, otherwise it is not Christian baptism; thus the doctrine of the Holy Trinity is embodied in the initiatory rite of the Christian Church, and thereby shows that the starting-point of the believer is *grace*. He goes forth from the separating waters as a *son*, bearing the Father's name; as a *redeemed creature*, bearing the cross of his Master; as an *anointed* one, having the promise of the Spirit to strengthen and comfort him in fighting the good fight of faith. But does baptism, then, confer grace? Undoubtedly; what else is it for? All the ordinances of Christ are channels of grace and



blessing to those who properly use them. All Christians are agreed that the greatest blessings are connected with it—viz., the forgiveness of sins and the ingrafting into the body of Christ; while many, speculating on the *mode* and seeking to tie down the efficacy and working of the Spirit of God to *time* and *place* and *person*, would reduce this most blessed ordinance into an *opus operatum*, or magical charm, which takes effect only in the hands of certain privileged conjurors; yet, notwithstanding the importance of the ordinance of baptism, grace and salvation are not so inseparably annexed unto it as that no person can be regenerated or saved without it, or that all that are baptized are undoubtedly regenerated. There is one baptism; and the English, the Scotch and the Germans are as well baptized and show as many fruits of the Spirit as Spain, Italy and Austria. The presumption of papists and apostolical successionists is intolerable. “By their fruits ye shall know them;” and we will not take their thorns and thistles for the fig tree and the vine.

#### IX. ONE GOD AND FATHER OF ALL.

*One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all* (ver. 6).

Here in Greek, as in English, the absence of *one* before the second noun, *Father*, shows that it belongs to and qualifies the first, and the meaning is, There is One who is God and Father of us all. *God* and *Father* belong to the same person. It is the same construction as that of the Greek article in similar cases. When two nouns are connected by *and*, the first having the article and the second not, you are to refer both nouns to the same person (Col. ii. 2; 1 Pet. i. 3; 2 Pet.

i. 2; Jude 4; Eph. i. 3; Gal. i. 4; Eph. v. 5; 2 Thess. i. 12; Tit. ii. 13).

The ideas connected with *God* and *Father*—power and love—are here beautifully joined in the same person. Deity and paternity are united and manifested in Him whom we adore as God. Majesty is softened with tenderness, and the splendors of the divinity are tempered by the condescensions of paternal love. This principle is indeed wonderfully exemplified in all God's dealings with the human race since the beginning of the world. The entire Jewish theocracy was the clothing of the splendors of the present Ruler under the forms of a carnal ritualism. Whenever, in the Old Testament, the glory of the Lord appears, two things take place: the sinful creature is laid in the dust, and then a word of comfort comes from the excellent glory. Power is tempered with grace; the majesty of Jehovah, with the human-heartedness of the Father. Thus it was with Isaiah (vi. 5–9); Ezekiel fell prostrate (iii. 23); Daniel fainted and was sick certain days (viii. 17–27); John the beloved fell down as dead before the glory of his Master (Rev. i. 17); and even the fierce murderer of the saints (Acts ix. 4, 5) was overwhelmed by the manifested glory. It is a source of comfort to remark that in these and all such cases there is ever some word or act of kindness on the part of God to raise up and strengthen his trembling creatures. It is the realizing of the name *God and Father*. He claims from us fear and confidence, and these feelings are awakened and united by the majesty of God and the tenderness of a father. This is indeed the principle of incarnation. The awful glory of the incorruptible God is tempered, softened, *humanized*, in the person of

Christ. A human eye weeps, but the tears flow from the fountain of Godhead love; a human victim bleeds, but the rent veil of flesh discloses beyond it the ocean of eternal mercy. We connect in the life of Jesus Christ the history of a man with the character, faithfulness and compassion of God; the human and the divine are united, and from the cradle to the tomb his life is the manifestation of the name *God and Father*.

*He is above all*—that is, the one Ruler and Lord, whose power extends over all persons and things; the King and Governor of the universe. There is no necessity for limiting the *all* here, and the phrase “who is over all” is the characteristic of the supreme God, and is identical with *pantokrator*, the omnipotent, the almighty God (2 Cor. vi. 18: Rev. i. 8; iv. 8; xi. 17; xv. 3; xvi. 7; xix. 6, 15). It is applied to Christ (Rom. ix. 5), with several additions to strengthen its meaning. He, like the great Father, is *over all* and, it is added, “God blessed for ever”—viz., he is the supreme God.

Most of the ancient and many of the modern commentators see in the prepositions *above*, *through* and *in* the relations of the Persons of the Trinity to the creature. God is *over* all as the Father, sheds his grace and strength *through* all by Jesus Christ the Son, the Mediator, and dwells *in* all as the life and sustainer by the Holy Ghost. This agrees well with the relative positions of the three divine Persons in reference to the creation and to one another: the Father is *on* the throne; the Son, or Mediator, is *at* the right hand of the throne; and the Holy Spirit dwells *in* the Church. Even De Wette admits a reference to the Trinity in this passage, though he is far from explain-

ing it in an orthodox sense. Some take *you* as limiting the whole sentence to believers, thus: "There is one God and Father, who is above you all and through you all and in you all." This is true, but it is not the whole truth of the passage. There is no reason why the Greek plural *all* should necessarily be masculine in the three cases where it occurs in the verse.

These are the *seven* celebrated unities, and in the hand of the apostle they are arranged into a picture of exquisite beauty. To one blessed unity we are urged—the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; and as examples of the principle of unity seven others are added, which embrace the most vital points of the Christian faith. There is, perhaps, something in the order of arrangement—*Church, Spirit, Lord God*—intended to show the progress from the outward and visible to the fountain of the invisible and incomprehensible God. The Spirit leads the believer to Christ the Mediator, who brings him to the Father, where the expanding and satisfied soul rejoices in the fullness of God. God the Father is the end, the Son the Mediator is the way, and the Holy Spirit the Comforter is the all-pervading life. The glorious Being called *God and Father* is the *End*, the *Telos* to which Church and creation are approaching, as he is also the *Pēgē*, the fountain from which all creation flows.

#### X. JESUS THE SOVEREIGN GIVER.

*But unto every one of us is grace given according to the measure of the gift of Christ* (ver. 7). This unfolds the idea that *Jesus is the sovereign Giver*, out of whose fullness we receive grace for grace. His gifts, according to this verse, are not to be measured by our deserv-

ings or our prayers, or even by our necessities, or by anything in us, but according to his own benevolence.

Grace, in this place, is not "function" or "office," though such a sense is admissible (Rom. xii. 3; xv. 15; 1 Cor. iii. 10; Gal. ii. 9; Eph. iii. 2, 8; 2 Tim. ii. 1; Rom. i. 5), but the favor, kindness and good pleasure of God, which like a fountain sends forth its streams in all directions. It is the *grace* which has its fount or source in God, by which the great Father was disposed to give the Son—by which the Son, though rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich (2 Cor. viii. 9).

Grace is opposed to merit, and is attributed in Scripture equally to the Father, to the Son and to the Holy Ghost. Above twenty times does the phrase "grace of God" occur in the New Testament; eight times we read of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ; and the Holy Ghost is called by the name "Spirit of grace" (Heb. x. 29). This is the aspect in which we delight to contemplate God. He is seated on a throne of grace; the Holy Scripture is the word of his grace; the Son of God is the gift of his grace; his Spirit works the fruits of his grace in the hearts and the lives of believers. From the Father as the Fountain-Head, through the Son as Mediator, and by the Holy Spirit, the Regenerator, the Comforter, is the gift of his grace manifested to the members of the body of Christ. This shuts out jealousy by shutting out *merit*, and makes all the members dependent on the Head alone.

## XI. THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST.

*Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now*

*that he ascended, wh it is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things)* (ver. 8-10).

This great act of the mighty power of God opened the heavens and gave us the hope of entering into the house not made with hands. This was predicted in the Psalms (lxviii. 18) and shadowed forth in the institution of the Aaronic priesthood. "*Wherefore he saith,*" or "*the Scripture saith,*" or "*the Lord saith*" (Gal. iii. 16; v. 14; 1 Cor. vi. 16; James iv. 6; Acts xiii. 35; Heb. x. 5; 2 Cor. vi. 7), "*When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.*"

Here we observe—

(1) That all the forms of quotation go on the principle that the Lord is the Author of the sacred Scriptures. They are the word of God, and the Bible is as much God's book as the universe is God's work. He is as much the Author of the Bible as John Bunyan is the author of the *Pilgrim's Progress*, and therefore, according to the testimony of the apostle, it must be given by divine inspiration.

(2) The words of the psalm are not quoted literally, but according to the sense. The phrase "Thou hast received gifts," as applied to Christ at his glorification, could mean only that he received for the purpose of distribution, and hence the apostle quotes them in this sense: "He gave gifts to men." This Hebrew phrase may be rendered either "Thou hast received gifts in the human nature," or "Thou hast received gifts for the sake of man." (See Gen. xviii. 28; 2 Kings xiv. 6.) The apostle uses the words in the sense of the

*purpose* for which the gifts were received, and there is no contradiction between the psalmist and the apostle. Thus the difficulties of this quotation vanish when we examine them closely, and the Old and the New Testament are in complete harmony.

Rosenmüller expounds Ps. xviii. and never mentions the name of Christ; and the neologists in general see no Messiah in the Old Testament. To these, indeed, Eph. iv. 8, if they had any modesty, would present a formidable obstacle. Paul asserts the psalm belongs to Christ, and they assert he is mistaken and that he has perverted (De Wette) and destroyed its meaning. They assert that *lamarom* ("on high") means the heights of Mount Zion, and Paul says it means heaven. Which is right? (See the Scripture usage of the word: Ps. vii. 7; xviii. 16; xciii. 4; cii. 19; Jer. xxv. 30; Isa. xxxvii. 23. These passages connect the word with the heavenly mansions, and justify the application of the apostle.) But, leaving the subtleties of perverted or perverting criticism, let us ask—

(3) What is there taught in the passage? We have, first of all, the glorious truth that Jesus Christ, our Kinsman-Redeemer, has entered, in our name and nature, into the holiest of all, there to appear in the presence of God for us. We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, which, though of little value to the rationalists, is useful to us who believe in a personal God, the sinfulness of man and a future judgment. He is our Forerunner, and there is not one step of the weary way which he has not consecrated with his labors, his tears and his blood; not one burden which he has not borne; not one enemy whom he has not conquered; not one temptation before which

we fall which he did not resist; not one pang of mortal anguish which he did not endure; and now, as the Victor and royal Prince, he dispenses his favors to his subject people. He has led captivity captive—that is, as I understand it, he has led the captivator captive (Judg. v. 12) and spoiled the principalities and powers (Col. ii. 15) which led us into the bondage of sin and death. All our enemies are overthrown; sin, death and Satan, our conquerors, are led captive by him; and the immortal Victor has taken his seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high. But then, secondly, he has received gifts for men—yea, even for the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell among them (Ps. cxviii. 18). Observe the three Persons of the Holy Trinity in this verse—the Father, who gives the gifts; Jesus, who receives them; and the dispensing of the gifts is that the Lord God (*viz.*, the Holy Ghost, John xiv. 17; 1 John ii. 27; Acts ii. 33) might dwell among them: the Giver, the Mediator and the Gift—the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. It is, then, the doctrine of our text that Jesus, the ascended Mediator, has gifts for men—yea, for the rebellious. It is surely a sweet and pleasant doctrine that we may supply all our needs out of a Brother's fullness and tell all our sorrows into a Brother's ear. We know each other. In the wastes of the infinite unknown, in the solitudes of the unfathomable eternity, there is one attracting point, one converging centre, where human hearts can find sympathy and a home.

“ When I rise to worlds unknown,  
See thee on thy judgment-throne,  
Rock of ages, cleft for me,  
Let me hide myself in thee.”



But let us dwell a little longer on this delightful theme, for surely, as sinful, needy creatures, these gifts are exactly what we need. He has gifts for men. The *charismata*, or gifts of the Holy Ghost, are treasured up in him; in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and he is the head of all principality and power for the very purpose of satisfying, governing and blessing the creation. Come, then; ask and receive, that your joy may be full.

But He that ascended is the same who descended first into the lower parts of the earth; and the question to be asked and answered is this: "What are these lower parts of the earth?" Possibly it means the womb of the Virgin Mary (Ps. cxxxix. 15), possibly the grave (Ps. lxiii. 9; Isa. xlv. 23), for the words may be applied to both. Many of the ancients and most of the papists refer it to the descent into hell mentioned in the creed, and expound it of the lower world, the invisible world, Hades, or perhaps of purgatory. There is nothing of this, however, in the text, and the opinion, since the days of Bishop Pearson, has been exploded. The Greek word for *parts* is probably a mere gloss, and is wanting in many manuscripts. Tischendorf rejects it. The contrast is between *heaven* and *earth*, not between the higher and the lower parts of the earth; and the genitive, *of the earth*, is the genitive of *explanation*, thus: He descended into the lower regions of the earth—the lower earthly regions as contrasted with the heavenly throne and glory. This world is the scene of his birth, life, death and resurrection. He left his glory and came to this lower world, and, having finished his work of redemption, he ascended up far above all heavens that he might fill all things. He is the same glori-

ous Being in all these conditions, and gathers around him at every step of the divine procedure the sympathies and destinies of the temporal and eternal worlds. He is exalted far above all heavens. The Scripture seems to exhaust language in describing the glory and majesty of the risen and ascended Lord (1 Tim. iii. 16; Heb. iv. 14; vii. 26; viii. 1; ix. 24; Eph. i. 21).

This mighty act of God includes in itself and draws after it many important doctrines and consequences which throw a flood of light on the progress and character of the divine administration. Man is shown to be the ruling creature in the dominions of God, for the Son of man, the Forerunner and Heir, is by the power and will of the supreme God placed on the throne of creation. It follows as a necessary consequence that redemption is a wondrous work; that sin, which redemption expunges, is indeed very sinful; that love eternal guides the ways of Providence, even when darkness fills the sky and tempests desolate the world; and that the worth of the human soul and the dignity of man, as well as the destiny that awaits him, are exceedingly high and glorious. All this flows from the great fact of facts that the Son of man is on the throne of God: "that he might fill all things"—fill the vast universe with his presence, his holiness, his gifts and his glory. *Ta panta* or *to pan*—"the all," the whole universe—is the structure or temple into which the risen Redeemer has ascended that he might breathe into it the vigor and beauty of his own immortal life. The idea is wonderful and worthy of the conception of God. The universe is to be established and headed up (Eph. i. 10), governed and

guided through eternity, by the will and power and wisdom of the God-Man. The creation and the Creator are united in one Head.

Or are we, with Bloomfield, to take the neuter, "all things," for the masculine, "all persons"? Then the purpose of the ascension is to fill all the offices of the Church, as well as all the members of his body, with the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit according to his will. Or if, with St. Bernard, we take the verb in the sense of "to fulfill" (Mark i. 15; Matt. ii. 17; Acts xiii. 27; John xii. 38), then the Son of man is ascended to fulfill all the prophecies and promises which remain to be accomplished.

## XII. THE NEW-TESTAMENT MINISTERS.

*And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ (ver. 11, 12).*

Jesus Christ is here again, and indeed I may say everywhere, contemplated as the fullness of God (*pleroma*, John i. 16; Eph. iii. 19; i. 23; Col. i. 19; ii. 9); all gifts and graces, offices and office-bearers, flow from him. He is the Revealer of the great Father's love to his children; and for this purpose he has in both his heavenly and earthly estate, but especially in the former, full and sovereign control over everything which directly or indirectly concerns his purchased possession. He gave gifts to men; he dispenses the ordinary and extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost according to his will (Acts ii. 33). He is the ruler in his own house, under whose hand the order of the

household (*economy*) proceeds. This same divine action is attributed to God (1 Cor. xii. 28; 2 Cor. iii. 6), and yet the Holy Ghost is the Author and Giver of all the gifts and endowments of the Church (1 Cor. xii. 1–11). So that the three Persons of the Godhead are in every possible way connected with the forming and perfecting of the body of Christ.

“*He gave some, apostles*”—viz., he *appointed* some to be apostles; he separated and ordained them to be apostles. (See John vii. 19; Gal. iii. 21; Acts vii. 8; John vi. 22.) So the Hebrews use *give* for “appoint” or “ordain” (Josh. xxiv. 26). (Comp. the wider use of “give,” Ezra ix. 11; see also Num. xxv. 12; Gen. xvii. 2; Lev. xxvi. 1, where the Septuagint has “place” for the Hebrew “give.”) These apostles, so given, consecrated and sent by him, formed the noblest institute the world ever saw. They were in the strict sense of the term *sent ones*—the apostles of Christ. And he was the Apostle of God: he saw and bore witness for God; they saw and bore witness for Christ. He called them, named them, endowed them, and then sent them forth as his heralds and ambassadors to announce the kingdom of heaven to all nations. They were, on the whole, poor, illiterate, uneducated men, fishermen and tentmakers; yet he made them such instruments of truth and wisdom that from their lips nations might learn righteousness and senators and kings wisdom. They changed the face of the world, and by the power of truth and patience and courage unto death they laid the foundations of a moral kingdom of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Their letters differ as much from those of Cicero as the kingdom of heaven differs from the

Roman empire. Truth and wisdom shine forth in their writings, while their conduct, their mode of life, their disregard of danger and death in their path of duty, their calmness in moments of perplexity, their noble bearing on all occasions, reveal a clearness of judgment and a certainty of conviction which astonish and attract the heart. They are the poorest and most miserable of men (1 Cor. iv. 13), and yet heavenly treasures are dispensed by their hands; they are in want of the common necessities of life, while yet they go about preaching glad tidings to every creature, healing the sick, raising the dead to life again and communicating the gifts of the Holy Spirit by "the laying on of their hands." You see no oddities about these men, though they are altogether peculiar. Their holiness burns with a bright, steady light, and their path is ever the golden medium of well-balanced minds. They are to be found neither in the cell of the anchorite nor on the pillar of Simeon. All that which most attracts vulgar minds has passed away, and in all their poverty, meanness of origin and calling they stand forth before the eye and the admiration of mankind as the purest patriots, the most accomplished teachers, the most patient sufferers, the most triumphant conquerors in a moral sense, the most faithful preachers of the cross, the most fearless ambassadors and the most glorious martyrs which the world ever saw.

Had they any successors? In the strict sense of the word, none. They had seen the Lord; they had touched and handled his risen body. He had breathed into them the Holy Spirit, given them their commission visibly and audibly, and they were actually enabled

to work miracles and communicate the Holy Ghost. When their pretended successors do these things, we shall listen to their claims. Will any reasonable man believe there is more of the Holy Ghost in Italy than in England or in Scotland? Certainly ignorance, tyranny, falsehood, lying wonders, sweating statues, image-worship, Mariolatry, are no signs of the special presence of the divine Spirit!

But "*he gave some, prophets.*" On *prophets and prophecy*, see Luke i. 76; iv. 24; xiii. 33; Matt. xvi. 4; John vii. 52; also 2 Pet. i. 20, 21; Rev. i. 3; xix. 10; xxii. 7, 10; 1 Tim. i. 18; iv. 14.

The noblest, though not the greatest, function of the prophet is to *foretell* future events; hence the prophets of the Old Testament unfolded the destiny of the nation and announced the time, the character, the birth, life, death and kingdom, of the coming Deliverer. Jesus is the Prophet of God, the last, best and fullest Revealer of the invisible Jehovah, and the Church which is founded on him has a prophetic as well as an historic aspect. The future is as certain and as nearly related to us as the past, and to feed the faculty of hope God has given prophecy. We can as little cease to hope as cease to remember; and, while the apostle testifies to a risen Saviour and redemption finished, the prophetic cry, "Behold, he cometh!" directs the eye to the purchased inheritance and the kingdom of glory. There may be prophecy and inspiration without the foretelling of future events; and, indeed, the greater part of the prophetic office might be exercised without it. The office is, however, named and characterized by the nobler functions of it. Those, therefore, who possessed an abundance of the gifts of the Holy

Ghost, and uttered the mind of God most clearly in warning, entreaty, prayer and praise, may be styled prophets in the New Testament. They are filled with the Spirit, walk in the Spirit, speak in the Spirit—not the well-arranged utterances of human wisdom, but words of divine love as they flow from the Fountain-Head; and the indwelling Quickener may at any moment open the eye of faith to visions of the most distant future.

*“He gave some, evangelists.”* These were the missionaries of the apostolic Church. Their office was to preach; their field was the world, and their message to the nations was a kingdom of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. This office shows the aspect which the Church bears to heathenism, and holds up to view the duty of sending the gospel to the heathen nations. We are built upon apostolic doctrines, guided by prophetic hopes and urged on by evangelistic labors into all the regions of the world. While the Church of the Redeemer continues in a sound, healthy condition the divine life within her must ever be impelling some of her members “to watch in all things, endure difficulties, do the work of an evangelist and make full proof of the ministry” among the benighted heathen. These are the pioneers of the host to break up the way for settled pastors and teachers—heralds to prepare the way for the kingdom, as John the Baptist prepared the way for the King himself. These are the safety-valves for the Church’s overflowing fullness, the golden pipes to conduct the oil of the sanctuary into all lands.

“Shall we whose souls are lighted  
With wisdom from on high—

Shall we to men benighted  
 The lamp of life deny?  
 Salvation, oh, salvation!  
 The joyful sound proclaim,  
 Till each remotest nation  
 Has learned Messiah's name."

We may always judge of the vigor of a Church by the amount of her evangelistic labors. These are streams that flow from the fount of grace within her. Oh how delightful to see the Church stretching out her arms to embrace in the fold of Christ the whole family of man! Go forth, ye swift messengers, ye evangelists of peace and love! Go forth from the camp with the cheers of the witnessing army, and in the name of God and his Anointed do battle for the King of glory! Go forth, go forth! Scale the mountains, swim the rivers, navigate the seas, breast the storms, and let the voice of divine love encircle the globe! Love is unconquerable, love conquers all things; God is love, and ye are the messengers of God. Go, and the God of peace go with you!

"*He gave some, pastors and teachers.*" The article here is not repeated before *teachers*, and therefore, by the doctrine of the Greek article, the pastors and teachers form but *one* class; both words adjectival, and belong to *some*. (As examples of this rule, see 2 Cor. i. 3; xi. 31; Eph. i. 3; 1 Thess. i. 3; Col. i. 3; Rev. i. 6; 1 Pet. ii. 25.) This principle seems to be very general in the New Testament, and we do not seek to disturb it, though the seeming exceptions are very numerous. We take, then, these two words, *pastors and teachers*, as belonging to the one class, called elsewhere bishops or elders, and in that case the pastor or shepherd character would describe their external public



office as guides and governors of the Church, while "teacher" or "doctor" would denote their relations to the Church as the preachers and maintainers of sound doctrine (Harless). Calvin, however, and Beza saw no such distinction, nor did they recognize the law of the Greek article in this passage. All these offices in the primitive Church were filled with the gifts and graces of the risen Christ. They were the channels between the exalted Son of man and his suffering members on earth. They were all varieties of the *charismata* (Rom. xii. 6, 7; 1 Cor. xii. 4, 7, 28; 1 Pet. iv. 10) or spiritual gifts with which the apostolical Church was endowed for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. This is the end of all the ministries of the Spirit. Churches and church offices are the means appointed by God for the diffusion of light and truth among the heathen and filling the earth with the testimony of his love. His purpose is not the salvation of all men, but the salvation of the Church which is his body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all. His ascension to the throne of heaven and the effusion of his quickening Spirit, as well as his incarnation and death on the cross, are intended to perfect the saints, to qualify and uphold a spiritual ministry and to edify the body of Christ. The Church, the body, is the principal thing, and all else is subordinate and subsidiary. Its edification is the great work and purpose of God on earth, for the accomplishing of which pastors and teachers, apostles, prophets, evangelists, and all other offices and ministries, have been appointed of the Lord.

## XIII. THE TIME AND THE PURPOSE.

*Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love (ver. 13-16).*

All this outfitting of the Church and church offices refers clearly to a preparatory state, and not to the rest which the Lord hath promised his people. The manna in the wilderness, the water from the rock, the cloud of glory and the tabernacle were true signs of the unsettled and wandering condition of the children of Israel; the rest was beyond the Jordan; they had much to hope for even under the direct and visible leading of Jehovah. With them, as with us, there was an *until*, and when they entered the Promised Land there was also an *until*—a hope set before them, even the coming of the promised Deliverer, the King of righteousness, the Shiloh, to whom the gathering of the nations should be; and we too, upon whom the ends of the earth have come, we who have seen the wonders of redeeming love and the person and work of the Messiah—we have our *until*. We wait for his second coming, as the Jews did for his first. Memory dwells on the cross with its par-

doning love, and hope anticipates the crown of glory ; our nature, like Janus, has two faces. We are far from satisfied with our present state, and, indeed, it is problematical whether we shall ever be satisfied :

“ Hope springs eternal in the human breast :  
Man never is, but always to be, blest.”

Does there, then, remain an *until* in the heavens ? By all means, there does ; and this faculty, as I judge, does not show the weakness, but the glory, of our nature, inasmuch as the boundless and ineffable God is the great and only end of our longings—full and perfect conformity to his image ; and I see no reason why this moulding of character and enlargement of faculties should not go on for ever,

“ And onward, still onward, arising, ascending,  
To the right hand of power and joy never ending.”

(1) *The unity of the faith* is what we are to be brought to : “ *Till we all come to the unity of the faith.*”

There were different opinions among the early Christians, as there are at present among us, but then, as now, the working of the one Spirit tends to bring about unity. There is at present an approximation to this unity of faith, though it is, indeed, very far from being fully realized, nor is it likely to be so while the papists retain their un-catholic and un-Christian principles. Let us rejoice, however, that the principles of the three creeds—the Apostles', the Nicene and the Athanasian—are confessed by nearly the whole of Christendom. These great principles are the central points of the Christian system, and it is consolatory to hear them repeated in all the languages of the world.

But what is this unity? It does not consist in all Christians thinking alike. This is impossible, and the first Christian churches were as different from one another in their forms and ceremonies as the present churches are, if not more so, and they had no visible earthly head to unite them externally. Charles V. spent his life in attempting to make the Germans think alike, and then died in his cell sighing over his folly, seeing he could not make *two watches go alike*. This is not the unity here spoken of. Force cannot give unity of faith, however it may give unity of *form*. We must *come* into this unity, and cannot be driven into it.

Nor is this unity a unity of outward visible organization, in which one form of government must necessarily prevail, but rather the unity of faithful, loving hearts, where one common spirit leads them all to the same throne of grace. There may be many folds and yet but one *flock* (John x. 16. For the *second* "fold," read "flock"). There may be great unity in respect of dogmas where there is no faith at all, and consequently no unity of faith. I may believe much about a person, and not believe on him. To believe on the Lord Jesus Christ is to put our trust in him, and *this* we may do without knowing much of dogmatic theology; and those who know it well may possibly be without saving faith. (For the Scripture delineations of *pistis* ("faith"), see 1 Cor. xv. 14, 19; Rom i. 17; iii. 22, 25, 26; ix. 30, 32; x. 6; Gal. ii. 16, 20; iii. 2-24; v. 6; Eph. ii. 8; iii. 12; Phil. iii. 9.) This faith of which Paul makes so much of is not a form sound words, nor a vinculum between ideas and realities, nor a bare assent to the truth of the Bible, nor a

holding *earnestly* what you do hold, whether true or false (Carlylism), nor an exaggerated view of the benevolence of God (Broad Church), nor simple, absolute assurance of salvation (first Reformers), but a holy, joyful, conscious resting of the soul on Christ and his finished work; and I maintain that as the divine life of the soul it may breathe and burn in all the sects and churches of the Reformation as freely and as fully as it did in the apostolic ages. The members of Christ have the unity of the faith, however divided by time and place and external forms. The Spirit's work is to make believers one by directing them all to the one centre—Christ; by setting before them all the one aim—his glory; by arraying them all against one enemy—sin; and by animating them all with one hope—that of his coming and kingdom.

(2) But we are to come, secondly, into the *unity of the knowledge of the Son of God*. This knowledge is therefore something higher and more difficult to attain than the unity of faith. Faith is, indeed, very simple, and is therefore the fit and common bond to unite the soul with Jesus. It is the blood in the body, it is the sap in the vine, it is the cement in the living temple of God. Some are learned, and some are ignorant; some are babes, and some are fathers; but they all have faith, and by it they are all united to the Conqueror in heaven. But the knowledge of the Son of God—that is indeed a fountain of infinite depth and fullness; and the effort of the Holy Spirit in his ordinances and offices is to lead us more and more into it; to reveal more and more of the glories of his character; to open more and more the doors of our hearts that we may receive and comprehend more and more

of his love; to unfold to the Church here and hereafter, as her brightening eye and enlarging heart can bear it, the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge, of truth and goodness and mercy, which the Father has secured to his children in Jesus Christ, the Son of his love. This knowledge is too high for me: I cannot attain to it; but my dim eye can see facts and forms of boundless significance and beauty in the incarnation, the atonement, ascension and advent, of Christ. I can admire, long after and adore the person of the Son of God, containing, as it does, all mysteries, reconciling, as it does, all diversities, and uniting, as it does, for ever and ever, the Creator and his creation; but no man nor angel can ever comprehend the oceans of tenderness and mercy which lie in and beyond these outward manifestations of his grace.

But what is the meaning of the phrase "*the Son of God*"? This, in the Greek, may have four varieties, arising from the use or the omission of the article. Both nouns may be articulated, as here; both may be unarticulated; the first may be articulated, and the second not; the second may be articulated, and the first not. Three of these forms are found in the New Testament, and two are found very often. All these are *essentially* of the same significance and point to the divinity of his nature. He is the Son, the Son of God, the well-beloved Son, the only-begotten Son—names and forms which indicate his divine nature. Son of man, he is truly man; son of Abraham, he is truly a Jew; son of David, he is truly royal; and Son of God, he is truly divine. The son in all cases has the nature of his father (Matt. xi. 27; Luke x. 22; John i. 14; x. 33-36), and hence he is compared,

contrasted and united with the Father in all possible ways (Matt. xxviii. 19; Mark xiii. 32; John v. 26; 1 John i. 3; ii. 22; iv. 14; 2 John 3). We may discover three forms or degrees in his Sonship. His eternal Sonship is the basis of election, his Sonship by the Holy Ghost (Luke i. 35) is the basis of regeneration, and his Sonship from the grave (Rev. i. 5; Col. i. 18, etc.) is the form and fountain-head of the first resurrection. All this is in keeping with the value set upon the title "Son of God" in the Holy Scriptures.

(3) We are to come "*unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.*" The Church is here compared to the human body, which proceeds from the first germ of life through many stages into the full-grown man. We are not to lay again the first principles, but go on to perfection (Heb. vi. 1). Our Master will have us men in knowledge, in labor and in love, and children only in malice and wickedness (1 Cor. ii. 6; iii. 1). We ought not to be contented with anything less than perfection—even the perfection of Christ; for, however far we may be from attaining it, our actual progress must keep pace with our efforts to follow the perfect One.

This perfection is further explained by the words "*unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.*" The word for *stature*, as is well known, means "full age" (John ix. 21; Heb. xi. 11; Luke ii. 52) and "full stature" (Matt. vi. 27; Luke xii. 25; xix. 3). The Reformers generally translate, as we do, "stature," and the modern commentators mostly prefer "age." The difference is inconsiderable, and in either case the sense is good. He will have the Church of full age and of full size. The measure of the *fullness*

(*pleroma*) I take to be the treasures of grace which God has laid up for us in the Christ. We are to come to a size and a maturity in our Christian life worthy of the gracious fullness of Christ. This is the noble effort of the Christian mind, ever to walk worthy of the gospel of Christ. He thinks not of how much sin and weakness and worldly-mindedness he may retain without being shut out of heaven, but of how much purity, holiness and heavenly-mindedness he can enjoy on earth. The fullness of Christ, which is the whole fullness of the Godhead bodily, is at his disposal to assist him in trials, strengthen him in temptations and make him victorious over all his enemies. The one bright image of his Lord and Master is ever before him, and he presses forward along the mark for the prize of his high calling. How great is this fullness of Christ! Grace, love, compassion, condescension, mercy and divine power, honor, righteousness and eternal glory, are treasured up in him in infinite abundance for all the wants of his people. Then yield to the enemy no more. Bear the burdens of the devil no longer. Be men—men of age and stature—and show the Church and the world what grace can make you. Saints are around you, martyrs are above like a cloud, and Jesus is before you to lead you on. Let us remember the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, and press forward in our Christian course,

“That to perfection’s sacred height  
 We nearer still may rise,  
 And all we do, and all we say,  
 Be pleasing in his eyes.”

(4) Now, then, being thus equipped, we are able (in the fourteenth verse) to contemplate *Christiana*



*steadfastness.* Our food is no longer milk, our pleasures are no longer childish (1 Cor. xiii. 11), the tutors and governors have done with us, and we stand forth in the cause of Christ as fearless soldiers of the cross—no longer babes, infants, children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine. The figure is beautiful and very expressive. If it were found in Homer, Virgil or Longinus, there would have been notes and dissertations upon it. See the unstable, restless billows of the sea! how they rise and fall and swell and surge over the rocks! They are ever on the move; you cannot calculate on them. Such is a child; all things are new to it, and the childish fancy changes like the waves and the winds. (See Isa. xxviii. 9; Matt. xi. 7; 1 Cor. xiv. 20; Heb. xiii. 9.) In this respect ye must be children no more; ye are no more like the changeable waves, but the firm rock that resists them. Jesus is the Rock of ages, and ye, being built upon him, share his strength and steadfastness. Your prayers, your faith and your hopes must partake of the certainty and firmness of unchangeable truth, for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea and need not expect the blessing of the Lord (James i. 6). We admire the firmness of the ancient Romans, but how much more admirable is the firmness of honest, intelligent Christian men in the full and fearless assertion of the doctrine of Christ, especially when it is the firmness of unresisting love bearing up against, and even in suffering and death triumphing over, the cruelty and wrath of the persecutor! This inflexible firmness of the Christian consciousness it is which in the apostolic ages triumphed over heathenism and planted the banner of the cross on the imperial

throne; which in the days of our venerated fathers pulled down the immense fabric of papal superstition in Britain and won for it and the world the principle of religious liberty; which then and now, and for ever, must awaken and sustain the hostility of a sin-loving and God-forgetting world. There are deceivers abroad (says the apostle), who with the trickery and cunning of gamblers\* lay their plans to seduce you from the simplicity of Christ. Such existed in the primitive times, and such exist still—men of corrupt minds who delight to seduce the innocent, and who forget or disbelieve that there is a God that judgeth in the earth. Stand fast, therefore, against these corrupters, and show them that if in malice ye are children, yet in steadfastness ye are men.

(5) *Speaking the truth in love.* The Greek verb here has been variously translated. Jerome has "*Doing the truth in love;*" Beza, "*Carrying yourselves in charity;*" Luther, "*Genuine in love;*" De Wette, "*Of the truth, studious in love;*" Osterwald and Martin, "*Following the truth in love;*" Desacy, "*Practicing the truth in love.*" Those who wish to see more varieties of exposition or translation may consult Harless. (See Gal. iv. 16; comp. the Septuagint, Gen. xlii. 16; Isa. xliv. 26.)

Speaking the truth in love, acting out the truth in love, is opposed to the changing principles of falsehood, which make men as unstable as the waves of the sea. If church-officers be in the mind of the apostle, then *truth* is the object and the end of their ministrations; if the members of the church, then, too, *truth* is the

\* *Kubeia*, "a game at dice." The root is the Arabic *Caab*, whence "cube," and the "Caaba" of the Beitullah in Mecca.

pearl of great price, for which they are to sell all that they have that they may purchase. This speaking the truth in love is the means of their edification—that is, their growing up into him in all things which is the Head, even Christ. But remember that this speaking, or acting out, the truth must be *in love*; otherwise, the effect is entirely lost. Truth spoken in bitterness works no conviction in the conscience. Charity edifieth. Truth spoken in love is the balm to soothe broken hearts; it is the oil of the good Samaritan to calm the troubled waters of the wounded spirit. This is the sap of the vine, the cement that binds together the stones of the living temple, the truth spoken in love. God is the God of truth; Jesus is the way, the truth and the life; the Bible is the word of truth, and everything in Scripture tends to magnify and enhance the value of truth. Be this, then, the principle of your walk and conversation among men—to speak the truth in love; and, doing so, we may be sure that we shall grow up into the fellowship of the risen Head.

(6) We come now to the sixteenth verse, which unfolds the principle of the *Head* and the *body*, already mentioned largely in our chapter, but ever recurring in the writings of Paul. Christ is the Head, and believers are the members of his body (1 Cor. xi. 3; xii. 27; Eph. i. 22; iv. 15; v. 23; Col. i. 18; ii. 10, 19).

The obvious truths contained in this figure are the following:

*First.* That there is complete and absolute distinction between the Church and the world; they are, in time and in eternity, as distinct from each other as any two corporations can be.

*Secondly.* The visible churches of Christendom are

not the body of Christ; they contain the members of it, but the vast mass of baptized unbelievers cannot, except in a very wide sense, be said to belong to the body of Christ.

*Thirdly.* We become members of Christ by faith in his name, and this union is the great truth expressed by the various terms "conversion," "repentance," "new nature," "new birth," "new life," etc.

*Fourthly.* We are strong in faith, warm in our affections, pure, peaceful and holy, in proportion as we realize our position and standing as members of our risen Head. Conscious communion with him and through him is the source of a serene and joyful Christian walk.

*Fifthly.* This is a *growing* union; the relations between the soul and the Saviour become closer as we know and enjoy more of his love. The more we drink from the ocean of his fullness, the more we desire to drink. His love in us is at first only a spark, but, being nourished and fed with oil from the sanctuary, it becomes a flame which nothing can extinguish.

May we realize the dignity and responsibility of our position! We are joined with the Conqueror at the right hand of God. Let us tread this earth lightly, knowing that our heart and our treasure and our home are in heaven.

"The Saviour lives, no more to die;  
He lives, the Lord enthroned on high;  
He lives, triumphant o'er the grave;  
He lives eternally to save.  
He lives to still his people's fears;  
He lives to wipe away their tears;  
He lives their mansions to prepare;  
He lives to bring them safely there."

## CHAPTER IX.

This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But ye have not so learned Christ; if so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: that ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members one of another. Be ye angry and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: neither give place to the devil. Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.—EPHESIANS iv. 17-32.

THIS fine passage refers to two parties and delineates the character and duties which belong to them respectively, the Gentiles and the believing Church—the state of heathenism and the state of Christianity; in other words, what the Ephesians had been and what grace had made them—our condition by nature and our gos-

pel state. The first we find described in verses 17-19, and to it we must first turn our attention.

### I. THE WALK OF THE GENTILES—NATURE.

*This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness (ver. 17-19).*

It is melancholy to look abroad upon the fair and beautiful world which God pronounced very good and find poison in the plants, disease and death in the atmosphere, the elements of combustion and confusion slumbering in the earth, and the whole form and comeliness of nature sullied by the defilement of sin. It is still more melancholy to contemplate the history of *man*, the king and lord, as well as the minister and interpreter, of Nature—a history not of beautiful and loving obedience to God, but of misery, confusion, moral degradation and death. Almost every page of history is reddened with the blood of battles, defeats and victories. Gigantic forms of evil rise spontaneously in the different nations out of the human heart, and shed their corrupting seeds over the polluted soul which produced them. The simple instincts of our moral nature become perverted and the distinctions between good and evil, right and wrong, are confounded under the influence of evil habits and triumphant crime. Religion degenerates into idolatry, and the erect and noble form of man is seen bowing down to the work of his own

hands. The thoughtful who are capable of contemplating the frame of Nature and the regularity of her laws become pantheists and altogether reject the idea of a living, personal God. The ignorant multitudes, however, feeling their weakness, trembling for the future and knowing that they must die, will have gods; their nature is religious, and the corrupt heart will produce gods like themselves. "*Timor fecit deos*" ("Fear made the gods"), said the old heathen scoffer; and it is certainly true that polytheism, in all its ramifications, is the counterpart and exponent of the moral condition of the nations. The worship and the worshipers correspond to each other as face answers to face in a glass. The descending scale from God to Nature is an historical fact connecting Adam with his fallen posterity; the ascent from Nature up to Nature's God is a metaphysical fiction proved historically to be false by all the religions of heathenism. The only vinculum between a *holy* God and the fallen creation is *revelation*. The conception of such a character as that of the Son of God is as much above us as is the creation of the world. In the midst of this system of fallen manhood, which for ages sent forth as from a teeming fountain its corrupt streams, Christianity, a seed of life in Judaism, bursts forth in the Lord and his apostles into full maturity and vigor. Now the contest begins in earnest, and the warfare between light and darkness must envelop all the nations of the world. "This I testify in the Lord" (a solemn asseveration), says Paul, "that ye walk not as other Gentiles walk."

*First. In the vanity of their mind.* This is the first indictment against heathenism. It is vain, empty,

fruitless. There is nothing substantial, immortal, eternal, in it. The *vanities* are the *idols* (Acts xiv. 15) which the nations worship instead of God, who made the heavens and the earth, and the vain conversation (1 Pet. i. 18) is the idolatrous walk which we received by tradition from our fathers. So the Hebrews used *vanities* for the false gods of the heathen (Jer. viii. 19; x. 8; xiv. 22; Eccl. v. 6; Deut. xxxii. 21; 1 Kings xvi. 13; Ps. xxxi. 7 [in Hebrew]). They made their idols, they worshiped them and they expected blessings from them. All this is folly and vanity. God alone is the object of our adoration, and he alone can hear and answer our prayers. The oracles, the idols, the images, which the nations venerate are lying vanities and cannot protect their votaries in the time of danger. They walk in the vanity of their mind; they have no true notions of the nature, majesty and perfections of God; and, knowing nothing really greater than themselves, they are become vainly puffed up and inflated. Give them the knowledge of the true God and they see their insignificance at once.

*Second. Having the understanding darkened.* Go into any heathen country and realize this picture. You find no truth, no love of truth, in the land; so that in courts it is nearly impossible to get at the truth. Lying is not considered criminal, and truth-telling is unnecessary when it ceases to be useful. The understanding is darkened; the fountains of life are corrupted in their very source, and all the foundations of rectitude and morality are destroyed. The presence of a personal, powerful, all-seeing God is wanted, and no fictions of the mind can supply its place.



*Third. Alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.* What is the life of God? Some say it is a life according to the will of God; Calvin makes it regeneration; and Olshausen, the life which every creature has while it remains in communion with God. I understand it to be simply the life which God gives, which seems the simplest and most natural meaning of this genitive. "Life," in Scripture, signifies happiness, glory, the beatific enjoyment of Jehovah in his kingdom (Matt. xix. 16, 17; John iii. 15, 16); and these he graciously promises to share with his saints. From all this they are alienated through the ignorance that is in them. It is life eternal to know the true God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent (John xvii. 3). This life is in Jesus Christ our Redeemer; and till the Gentiles receive him they remain in death, and the wrath of God abideth upon them (John iii. 36). What a motive for the missions of the Church!

"Hark! what mean those lamentations  
Rolling sadly through the sky?  
'Tis the cry of heathen nations:  
'Come and help us ere we die.'

"Christians, hear their sad complaining;  
Listen to their dying cry;  
And, the love of Christ constraining,  
Join to help them ere they die."

This is not the cry of earnest convicted sinners longing to be delivered from the burden of transgression, but the dumb, stupid cry of millions who feel little or nothing of their wretchedness and alienation from God.

*Fourth. Blindness, or rather hardness, is the thickening or hardening of the skin till it becomes callous;*

and so, says the apostle, the Gentiles have turned into the hardness and insensibility of stone the heart which God made to love and serve him. The moral sense is extinguished; so that they can recognize neither their own necessities nor the claims which God has upon them. This is an awful characteristic of the heathen world, and calls upon us to send them the gospel of Him who is eternal love.

“Shall we whose souls are lighted  
With wisdom from on high—  
Shall we to men benighted  
The lamp of life deny?”

Oh no, never! These darkened, blinded nations have upon us a thousand claims which we should seek to meet before we stand at the judgment-seat of Christ.

*Fifth. Being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness* (ver. 19). The Greek word for “being past feeling” signifies to *grieve out*—to have done with grieving over one’s actions, so that all sense of shame is lost. This is a fearful trait of character, and with unerring skill marks the polytheism of the heathen. Read their literature and observe how deeply immoral the best and the purest of their writers were. Look at the monuments of the Greeks and Romans in general, look at the ruins of Herculaneum and Pompeii, and think how scandalous and shameless the public manners of the nation must have been. Or enter a heathen temple in India where the gods are to be worshiped, and at the present hour you behold the abominations of Venus, Baal and Astarte. Shame is one of the first feelings of childhood, as well as one of the strongest of our manhood; and when we have become

able to extinguish it, our condition is morally hopeless. The beautiful and the good can attract us no more. Hence the natural consequence was the next step in the climax—viz., they gave “*themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.*” A fearful picture, truly! Every word is emphatic and shows the dominion which sinful habit had acquired over them. It was their own act; they gave themselves over to it. They gloried and rejoiced in working all uncleanness with greediness. Sin is a fearful master; it increases its dominion over us with all the rapidity of a burning fire. Every indulgence enlarges the appetite and makes repentance more improbable and more difficult. Such were the Gentiles as Paul saw them, and as he described them with a master’s hand. Hence the necessity of a divine revelation to teach and of a divine Deliverer to redeem. Blessed be God, the fullness of the times came, and the seed of a woman became the Serpent-Bruiser. The Daystar has arisen to chase away the darkness and the dangers of the night.

*Sixth.* It may be objected to the apostle’s description of heathenism that it is exaggerated, and even contrary to the innate principles of human virtue and rectitude. But the proper answer to this is: (1) It is yet to be proved that there are innate principles of virtue in man—I admit innate capacities only—and till this is done we may hold by the words of Paul in this matter; (2) I have mentioned already that the literature and the monuments of the heathen, ancient and modern, are remarkably corrupt and abominable; (3) I add that their wise men and philosophers taught sentiments of the grossest impiety and vileness; so that, as Origen

says, "In committing adultery and whoredom they did not think themselves violating good manners." Among the refined and civilized Greeks theft was dishonorable only when the thief had not sufficient adroitness to conceal it. The great philosopher of Athens taught Aspasia the arts of seduction. The wise men of heathenism had hardly any perception of the beauty of truth. Whitby collects some of their maxims on this subject. Menander lays down the rule that "a lie is better than a hurtful truth;" Proclus asserts that "good is better than truth;" Darius, in Herodotus, teaches, "When telling a lie is profitable, tell it." Plato allows you to lie as much as you please, if you do it at the proper time; for, as Maximus Tyrius asserts, "there is nothing decorous in truth save when it is profitable, and sometimes a lie is profitable and truth is injurious to men." These specimens will be sufficient to justify the apostle in his awful denunciations of the crimes and corruptions of the heathen world.

But come now, and from verse 20 onward let us contemplate—

## II. THE DUTIES AND THE VIRTUES OF THE NEW-TESTAMENT CHURCH.

*But ye have not so learned Christ; if so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus (ver. 20, 21).*

*First. Ye have not so learned Christ.* Ye have received him as the source of all goodness, purity and truth, in whom there is grace for the humble, strength for the weak and mercy for every guilty creature. Here Jesus Christ is presented as the great object of

the believer's study, and truly the theme is a high and wonderful one. Think of a Mediator between the holy, infinite God and his weak, sinful creatures—his qualifications, his offices and his mighty acts; think of him in all the varieties of person and character, as the Son of God and the son of man, the King and the subject, the Sceptre-Bearer and the burden-bearer, in whom, from the beginning, all the prophecies and promises centre, and in whom now, through his incarnation, crucifixion and ascension, they are fulfilled and for evermore made sure to his believing people. This is no subject for cold speculation. No; we behold in him the medium and the measure of Jehovah's love, and are drawn to him by a thousand cords of admiration and gratitude.

"O verbum incarnatum,  
Rerum principium,  
Pro me humiliatum,  
Velut mancipium."\*

The more we know of him, the less are we likely to be puffed up with other knowledge. All knowledge is in itself good and elevating, but in Christ alone it becomes a holy, sanctifying principle, casting down pride and all lofty imaginations. Hence the apostle speaks not so much of knowing and being taught the truth generally, but—

*Second. The truth as it is in Jesus.* Here is the great difference between a person and a thing—between a holy, living reality and a cold, beautiful abstraction. We connect everything with the loving person of our Kinsman-Redeemer, and find its value infinitely en-

\* "Incarnate Word, creation's primal Fount,  
For me thou didst assume a servant's form."

hanced thereby. Every utterance is sweet because he speaks; every gift noble and attractive, because he gives; every precept, doctrine and warning effectual, because he is the Teacher. He teaches as one having authority, and not as the scribes. We know that he loves; that in his descent from the throne to the manger, the cross and the grave he has given the most wonderful proofs of his love; and hence the words and truths which from others would have been ineffectual to penetrate our hearts with the authority of God. It is no longer an idea or a theory or a doctrine, but a *person*, a holy, loving, redeeming Brother, in whom we see all truth, holiness and beauty realized and manifested.

“O Lord, our Lord, and spoiler of our foes,  
There is no light but thine; with thee all beauty glows.”

### III. WHAT WE ARE TO PUT OFF.

*That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts* (ver. 22).

Hence, being taught the truth as it is in Jesus, ye are to put off the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts. Who is this “old man”? The old man means the old Adam in us, as distinguished from Christ, the second Adam, formed in our hearts the hope of glory. There is a vinculum that connects us with the fall—the old man; and there is a connecting-link which unites us with the Redeemer—the new man which is created in righteousness and true holiness. These are the twins, like Jacob and Esau, struggling in the heart of every man; these are the two laws which war against each other so fiercely

(Rom. vii. 23) in the very bosom of the Church, the inward types of the two kingdoms—the Cains and the Abels, the Sauls and the Davids, the Judases and the Johns—which have been in mortal conflict since the beginning of the world, and which must continue to be so until the coming of the Lord, when the kingdom and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him (Dan. vii. 27).

The nature of the old man is clearly defined in Scripture, and, taken in connection with its contrasts and accompaniments, teaches us much important truth. Thus the old man is to be put off and the new man put on; he is corruptible, and therefore to be crucified, or rather we who believe are baptized into the faith that he is crucified with Christ on the cross, and that the new man should henceforth be our only concern. This is nearly the same as the *outward* man, in whom the seeds of the flesh find their nourishment and growth, whom it is our duty to resist and weaken day by day until the new creature, the inner man, be prepared in beauty and holiness for entering into the kingdom of the Lord.

How may we know the old man when we meet him? The twenty-second verse gives us two marks of him: he is connected with our former conversation when we lived in unregeneracy, and he is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts. These make his presence known, and, indeed, one great part of the work of grace in the heart is to resist and conquer his devices. There must be a constant putting off while we are in the flesh,

a constant watching unto prayer, a continual resisting of indwelling corruption, that the temple of our hearts may be kept pure and entire for our dear Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

“Oh for a heart to praise my God,  
 A heart from sin set free;  
 A heart that's sprinkled with the blood  
 So freely shed for me;  
 A heart resigned, submissive, meek,  
 My blessed Saviour's throne,  
 Where only Christ is heard to speak,  
 Where Jesus reigns alone.”

#### IV. THE RENEWAL: WHAT WE ARE TO PUT ON.

*And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness (ver. 23, 24).*

Christianity is not a system of negation. Everything is clear, definite and personal—positive duties commanded, positive sins named and forbidden, positive doctrines to be taught, and positive real persons to be loved or hated, as the case may be. Even so it is not enough that we die to sin: we must also live to righteousness. Death is only the preparation for life, and the loathsome passage of the grave leads to Mount Olivet and from thence to the heavenly throne. Put off the old and put on the new; resist sin, cleave unto righteousness; cease to do evil, learn to do well. Sin must be dethroned from the heart that grace may enter in and reign. Wash before you dress; scourge out the buyers and the sellers from the temple that the rightful Lord may there receive homage. The ancient fabric must come down, the sin-defiled structure must be leveled to the dust, before there can be laid the four-



dations of grace on which the new and beautiful temple must stand. Death and defilement have penetrated into the recesses of our moral nature; so that we require to be renewed in the very spirit of our mind.

This is a word of deep meaning, and we should consider it well. Not only the *nous*—the entire structure of the mind—is disordered and sullied, but the *pneuma*—the very spirit of the mind, the will and the affections, the guiding, controlling faculties of our being—are lying in ruinous disorder and require to be renewed. It is ever so. The deeper we search into the inner spirit of the natural mind, the more we find of chaos and night, of emptiness and rebellion against the will of God. The slime of the serpent has stained the fair material creation, and his poison has corrupted the fountains of our life into pools of vileness deep and black as hell. We need regeneration; the very spirit of our mind needs to be renewed.

This being done, then, by the good Spirit of God, we are to put on the new man, which, after God (in conformity to the will of God), is created in righteousness and true holiness, or, according to the Hebrew-Greek form, is created in the righteousness and holiness of truth. There is an apparent righteousness and holiness which is not based on truth, but on falsehood, and can never be acceptable to the God of holiness and truth. His nature is holy, his work is perfect and his word is true. He requires truth in the hidden parts, and can never be satisfied with the outward appearance of devotion, in which not truth, but error, is the ruling principle.

With regard to the new man we observe: (1) That it is entirely the work of the Holy Spirit, and can never

be accomplished by the mere will of the creature (John i. 13). He who in the material creation at the beginning breathed order and life into the chaotic mass must breathe into and vitalize our souls. He enters into the ruins which sin and death have made and brings forth the new man—not holding of Adam, but of Christ; not the perfect man of creation, but the perfect man of regeneration—on whom, glorified and immortalized in the kingdom of heaven, all the lineaments of the character of Christ shall be eternally inscribed. (2) *New* is the character of the dispensation. We have the new covenant with better promises; a new heart with its nobler aspirations; a new name written upon us; a new nature created within us; a new heaven above us; a new earth beneath our feet; and a New Jerusalem before us as we march through the wilderness. Old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

So the apostle tells us to put on the *new* man; we are united to Christ by faith, and he is the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, who sitteth on the throne to make all things new. Be it, then, our high aim to walk in newness of life worthy of Him who has called us from darkness into his marvelous light.

“Oh, may thy Spirit seal our souls  
 And mould them to thy will,  
 That our weak hearts no more may stray,  
 But keep thy precepts still,  
 Till to perfection's sacred height  
 We nearer still may rise,  
 And all we think, and all we do,  
 Be pleasing in thine eyes”

## V. LYING.

*Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members one of another* (ver. 25).

There are various kinds of lies, which differ from one another in moral enormity and vileness. (1) There are metaphysical lies, which are nearly the same as mistakes, as when you see a man coming in the distance and assert he is such a one, when, on approaching, he is found to be another. Such lies, however blameworthy, are quite different from voluntary, malignant lies. (2) There are lies of a blacker character, which may be called lies of jesting and humor. This vile habit leads naturally to still more criminal lies. (3) There are lies arising from profit, shame, ambition, where the liar wishes to defend himself or to escape some deserved punishment or to gain some advantage. (4) The intentional, malignant lie, by which we seek to deceive our fellow-men or to blacken their character. This is the climax of the liar's malignity, and very often he proceeds from one grade to another in this accumulating process of falsehood. The apostle says, "*Put away lying*"—viz., all kinds of lying—and speak truth every one with his neighbor.

Wherein lies the evil of lying? We observe (1) that a lie is the nearest thing possible to *suicide*, being a denial of the personality which God has given us and calculated to reduce the order of God's creation to confusion. (2) It is contrary to the nature and use of language, and to the purpose of God himself in giving us the organs of speech. (3) It makes men like devils and destroys all confidence in human society. Two

men give each other the lie, and you have a duel; one mob gives another the lie, and there is a riot; two nations give each other the lie, and you have war; our race gave God the lie in paradise, and we have the fall—the heaven and the earth in conflict with each other. Such are the effects of a lie. (4) We add that the liar is shut out from the kingdom of heaven by the authority of God, being by both nature and practice unfitted for the heavenly home. All truth and all righteousness are destroyed by lying; and hence it is the mark and sign-manual of the devil, who first brought disorder and confusion into the universe.

But are there no lies of *necessity*? Are there no examples where lies are justifiable? May we not follow the example of the midwives (Ex. i. 18); of Rahab (Josh. ii. 4); of Michal (1 Sam. xix. 16, 17); of David (1 Sam. xx. 6); of Hushai (2 Sam. xvi. 17, 18); of Elisha (2 Kings vi. 19)? No; these are not to be followed, but avoided, inasmuch as God gave us in his word the faults as well as the virtues of his saints. Augustine (*contra mendacium*), speaking of the midwives, says, "*Benefecit iis Deus, non quia mentite sunt, sed quia in homines Dei misericordes fuerunt; non est itaque in eis remunerata fallacia, sed benevolentia; benignitas mentis, non iniquitas mentientis*—that is, "God rewarded the midwives, not for their lying, but for their kindness to his people. Here, then, there is no reward given to falsehood, but to generosity; the reward is given to the kindness of the heart, and not to the iniquity of the liar." So we say of the others; and we utterly deny that the word of God or right reason can ever be made to justify what are called lies of necessity. Besides, how can we know when

there is such a necessity? Cannot God deliver us? Or may it not be better that we should *not* be delivered? Do we really believe in God and in providence? Or are these mere names, and therefore are we left to take care of ourselves? His glory and our own good may, perhaps, require the very thing we wish to avoid. The moment we seek to violate the laws of the creation, mental or moral, we are seeking after another God! The "*Mea fraus omnis*" ("The fraud is mine") of Virgil (*Æneid* ix. 427) is not a case in point; nor, indeed, is such a case conceivable, whatever the casuists of Rome and the Jesuits may say to the contrary.

See, on the other hand, what ruin and what desolation have been brought about by lies (Gen. iii. 1, 2; xxxix. 14; 1 Kings xxi. 13; 2 Kings v. 22; Esth. iii. 8; Matt. xxvi. 70; xxviii. 13; Acts v. 3; Tit. i. 12, etc.) from the beginning of the world. God is the God of truth; Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. We fell by the liar, and we are restored by the Truth-Bringer. The lie is the great divider between heart and heart, between man and his fellow, between God and his creatures. Truth is the healer of all breaches, the blood of the body, the cement of the temple of God. It may be opposed and oppressed and seemingly extinguished, but out of the blood and the ashes of the martyrs it will again rise with greater force and beauty than before. "*Magna est veritas et prævalebit*" ("Great is the truth, and it shall prevail"). Nothing is more admirable than an honest, sincere, truth-speaking tongue.

*Speak every man truth with his neighbor.* The truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, is one of the best characteristics of the Christian con-

versation. The reason is, "For we are members one of another"—that is, we all belong to the same body of Christ, to the same human family, to the same universe of God; and the life that pervades it all is *truth*, the circulating medium in the celestial corporation. In speaking lies you vitiate the blood by the infusion of a poisonous foreign element, and as it flows through the whole it will weaken the whole. A hint, an innuendo, uttered in the privacy of the tea-table, may ruin the character at the distance of thousands of miles. We are wonderfully knit together in the widespreading, entangled, many-colored web-work of humanity; and the great bond of union is the TRUTH, is the TRUE ONE, in whom, as a centre, all that is truthful and beautiful and serene finds its resting-place and its home. Let us speak truth one with another, for we are members one of another. We were all created in one man—Adam; we fell and were smitten to death in one man; we were all in the ark with Noah when the waters covered the world; we were all redeemed in one Man—the Lord from heaven. The race is one, and must bear one another's burdens; the Church is one, and the members suffer and rejoice with one another. This mutual membership is the law of creation, the law of providence and the law of love. A whole nation was cursed in Ham, a whole nation blest in Shem; a world destroyed in Adam, a new creation redeemed in Christ. So in our families, in our churches and in the kingdoms of the nations the great moral law of brotherhood is mutual membership, and *truth*—the truth spoken in love—is the healthful, purifying medium which purges off the baser materials and gives stability and beauty to them all.

“*Quid est veritas?*” (“What is truth?”) said Pilate, but would not wait for an answer. Transpose these letters, and you have the answer: “*Est vir qui adest*” (“It is the man who is present”). Yes, brother, he is the truth—the Man who is present; the ever-watchful, faithful Friend who loved us and died for our sins on the tree. He is the Truth, and our conversation should be of Him who, like truth, is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever.

#### VI. ANGER.

*Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath* (ver. 26).

This may be taken as a command to be angry with that with which God is angry; to be indignant against that unholy thing which he hates; to be of the same mind with God. This is the very highest idea we can entertain of holiness. We should look upon sin and righteousness, the Church and the world, time and eternity, with his eyes; we should enter into his mind and be fully satisfied with the justice and excellence of all that he does—his acts of love to the believer and his fearful judgments upon the finally impenitent.

It is better, however, to take it as a permissive imperative, thus: “It is allowable to be angry, but settled hatred is forbidden; let not the sun go down upon your wrath.” The sentence is probably taken from Ps. iv. 4 (Septuagint), where we find the words of our text. Our translators have given it, “Stand in awe, and sin not”—viz., stand in awe, in order that ye sin not—a sense which the Hebrew may well bear, but which the Greek hardly can. I think the meaning is this: Anger is allowable, but it is dangerous and

difficult to control. Jesus looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts (Mark iii. 5). God is angry with the wicked every day. You too may be angry; and if ye be so, take care that ye sin not, and, above all, do not cherish the principle of settled hatred and malignity. Be reconciled before ye sleep. The disciples of Pythagoras, when they had been angry, shook hands and embraced before the going down of the sun. Every evening is to remind us of death, and every morning of the resurrection of the dead. Reconciled with all our enemies and filled with the forgiving spirit of our Master, we can offer up the evening sacrifice of prayer and praise, lifting up holy hands without wrath or doubting (1 Tim. ii. 8). The spirit of the exhortation is the sweet, tranquillizing breath of forgiving love. We would imitate our heavenly Father, who is long-suffering, slow to anger and abundant in goodness and truth. Charity, which is love, not only believes all things and hopes all things, but also bears all things. This sweetness of life and character is the main ornament of our families, and far more important to our comfort and well-being than clear-eyed wisdom or commanding authority. The spirit of bitterness and complaint can out of the thousand littles of life which love can pass by or forgive work a pandemonium where only devils and devils' servants can feel at home.

Seek, then, brother, to have the mind of Christ, the sweet, all-enduring, all-forgiving spirit which was manifested in his active life and in his last dying prayer: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." How nobly Stephen died (Acts vii. 54-60) breathing this spirit of love! Nature, with



all her beauties, has nothing like this—so calm, so patient, so Godlike. May we ever cherish the spirit of forgiving love!

We come now to—

#### VII. DIABOLUS THE DEVIL.

*Neither give place to the devil* (ver. 27).

We observe here that in the mind of the apostle anger is connected with the agency of Satan. It is when the passions are excited and the reason is thrown off its guard that Satan is most likely to succeed in his temptations. He tempted Adam through the appetite, and it was when Jesus was alone and hungry that the tempter came to him in the wilderness of Judea. The Jews have a proverb that “Whosoever yields to anger is under the dominion of the fiends.” The Romans called anger a fit of madness; and we may well believe that Satan, rejoicing in ruin and seeking to drive his victims to the tombs (Matt. viii. 28), wishes nothing more ardently than to overthrow the stability and the harmony of the human mind.

Some moderns translate this, “Neither give place to the adversary,” which is tame and unlike the apostolic sentiment. Nothing can be more manifest than that the Scriptures everywhere recognize the presence of a powerful, personal, malignant being, the enemy of God and his saints, the first sinner, the chief and lord of a kingdom of wickedness and death (Eph. iv. 27; vi. 11; 1 Tim. iii. 6, 7; 2 Tim. ii. 26; Heb. ii. 14; James iv. 7; 1 Pet. v. 8; 1 John iii. 8, etc.). He that can make up his mind to philosophize a personal devil out of Scripture and out of the creation will not long hold by the doctrine of a personal Jehovah independ-

ent of the creation, the self-existent origin of all things. All will become confused in the order and objects of thought, and a dim, dreary, indistinct form of pantheistic abstraction will take the place of a holy, living, eternal God in whom the weary find rest, the persecuted an avenger and the sorrow-stricken world the hope of everlasting life. So, on the other hand, evil will lose its enormity when dis severed from personal agency; the fine feeling and edge of the conscience will become blunted, until, in the end, everything that exists—the good and the bad, the noblest virtues and the foulest crimes—will be reduced to the irresponsibility of a fatal necessity. No man is more like to the devil than he who denies his existence. He thinks himself free and victorious, while the coils of the old serpent are around him in the embrace of death. To the believer on the Son of God his power is broken (1 John v. 18) and his fiery darts are quenched on the shield of faith. Nevertheless, while in this world we are subject to his temptations, though with the sure confidence in our heavenly Father that with the trial there shall also be a way of escape. Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world. Without the permission of God and the consent of our own will Satan cannot touch us (Luke xxii. 32; Job i.). Hence, Augustine says, "*Consentientes tenet, non invitos cogit*" ("Satan rules us by means of the will; he cannot force those who refuse him admission"),\* and (on Matt. iv. 6) "*Persuadere potest, præcipitare non potest*" ("He can persuade, but he cannot force, us to sin"). He knocks, and may knock loudly, but till you open he cannot enter. It is awful

\* Ser. 32, Opp. v. 114.

to think that any creature should make room in the heart for the evil one, and yet we must be liable to this danger or the Holy Spirit would never have written for our learning the words, "Neither give place to the devil."

How, then, dear brother, can we most effectually resist him?

(1) Think of the promises of your heavenly Father, the purpose of his eternal love, the perfect and glorious attributes of his nature, all of which are engaged in your behalf.

(2) Think of the person of the Lord Jesus Christ and the wondrous work which he has done, and is still doing, for you; follow him in his descent from the throne of heaven to the stable, the cross and the tomb for thee, and read the inexpressible depths of compassion which brought him so. For thee—for thee, my brother, and for me—did he taste the bitterness and overcome the sharpness of death. Then see him, the Conqueror at the right hand of God, dispensing the gifts of the Holy Spirit as he pleases, adored by the angels and ruling in our glorified nature over the boundless universe. These thoughts will strengthen your resolutions to resist the devil.

(3) Prayer should be your defence in the hour of trial; without prayer the soul feels herself divorced from the fount of purity and strength, a withered leaf broken off from the tree of life, a loose stone detached from the temple of God, a homeless, aimless wreck on the ocean of eternity. Take refuge in God; fall down before his footstool in the humility of a sin-convicted rebel, yet in the confidence of an accepted child; and be assured that his grace will be sufficient

for you and his strength be made perfect in your weakness.

(4) Then think, finally, on the cruelty, malignity and final destiny of the devil. He is the enemy of God and mankind; his work is sin; his habitation for a thousand years is the bottomless pit, and then the lake of fire for ever and ever.

Give no place to the devil. He is the enemy, the destroyer, the old serpent, whom the Son of God was manifested in our nature to cast out and destroy.

#### VIII. THE THIEF.

*Let him that stole steal no more, but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth* (ver. 28).

Jerome thus translates: "*Qui furabatur jam non furatur;*" and Luther, our translators and many others have followed him, though without doubt the natural translation is "the thief:" Let the thief thieve no more, etc. That the present participle may be used in conjunction with imperfectly past action is manifest from many examples (Acts vii. 18, 26; xvii. 5; Heb. xi. 22; Luke v. 8), and the present participle of the substantive verb is often, especially in John, connected with the imperfect, of which John xi. 25 is a remarkable instance. Our translation, therefore, though not the most natural, is perfectly justifiable and gives excellent sense.

Some of the Jewish rabbis and many heathen justified certain kinds of theft, especially if part of the property were given for benevolent ends. In Sparta theft was deemed dishonorable and punishable only when it was discovered. The apostle teaches a differ-

ent doctrine. Grace is the medicine for the diseased soul—the only medicine that can renew its prostrate powers. The thief, the drunkard and the murderer are invited to enter into the kingdom of God, and his grace has made provision for their fallen and fearful degradation. There may have been thieves in the church at Ephesus, fornicators among the Corinthians, flesh-cherishing legalists among the Galatians, and then but one fountain for them all—the precious blood of Christ. Nor did these or any other sins, however enormous, being given up and detested, ever shut out any of them from the kingdom of heaven. Theft is a fearful transgression of the divine law, and the thunders of Sinai are uttered against it; yet the dying thief at the last hour obtained pardon and acceptance, and is now, no doubt, among the spirits of the blest above.

The proper compensation for theft is labor, as the apostle teaches; and not only is he to work with his own hands for his own support, but that he may have something to give to him that needeth. This is a noble principle, and we should carry it out in the Church and in the world. If we are in need, it is no sin to ask alms from the benevolent; it is better to be able to support ourselves by our own industry; and it is the best of all to have an overplus, that we may be able to distribute to the poor. It is more blessed to give than to receive; and by giving a cup of cold water to a disciple in the name of Jesus we bring ourselves into the position of God himself, the most blessed of all beings, because he is the universal GIVER. The poor shall never cease out of the land, nor shall the benevolence ever cease which God has appointed to supply their wants.

## IX. THE RIGHT USE OF THE TONGUE.

*Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers* (ver. 29).

Here the Greek syntax is after the Hebrew form: "All corrupt communications shall not proceed from your mouth," instead of "*Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth.*" Compare the following passages in Greek as examples of this kind of construction: Matt. xxiv. 22; Rom. iii. 20; Eph. v. 5; 1 John ii. 21; John iii. 15; 1 Cor. i. 29; Acts x. 14; vii. 1; 1 Cor. xv. 39; Matt. vii. 21. (Is there any difference in meaning between  $\mu\eta\ \pi\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$  and  $\omicron\upsilon\ \pi\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$ ?) The apostle here begins, as in many other places, with the *negative*: Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth. It requires as much wisdom and as much grace to know when to speak as to know to speak rightly, and it perhaps requires more grace still to abstain from corrupt communications. *Corrupt* does not mean merely obscene and filthy, but everything impure and of evil tendency. All that can irritate, divide or corrupt society is here forbidden; all hints at what dare not be freely spoken about; all innuendos, double meanings and mental reservations are forbidden. All such evil-speaking tends to putrefy society and make it like corrupting dead animals or decaying vegetable substances (Matt. vii. 17, 18; xiii. 48; Luke vi. 43). Thus your unguarded words are no trifle, inasmuch as they tend to the destruction of the social edifice. This is verified in all history. When the language and the literature become corrupt, the nation is near its fall. This was true of the Greeks and the Romans in ancient times, and in

modern Europe we have the example of France before the Revolution: the language was corrupt and the whole body politic interpenetrated with the poison of insincerity and lying. So it is with the individual; you can judge of him by what he says and by what he does not say. If his language be corrupt, you easily discern the fountain from which it flows—the unregenerate heart (Matt. xv. 18, 19). This, then, is a characteristic of the Christian, that no corrupt communication proceeds out of his mouth. Be it thine, be it mine, dear brother, for by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned (Matt. xii. 37).

But the tongue was made to be used, and hence more than mere negative excellence is required. *We must speak whatsoever is good* (according to the Greek text) for the edification of use—that is, say some, by hypallage, for “the use of edifying,” and quote “the master’s crib,” instead of “the master of his crib,” as something similar. Others search for various readings to get rid of the difficulty. This is, however, quite in vain, as all respectable authorities are in favor of the text as it stands. The variations are mere emendations and require no notice. De Wette gives the correct translation of this loose kind of genitive: “*Zur Erbauung je nach Bedürfniss*” (“Good for edification according to necessity”—viz., as often as you require to use it). (For such use of the genitive, see Winer, sect. 30-2.) Thus, then, the meaning will be, “As often as edification is required you are to speak that which is good, that it may minister grace to the hearers.”

Observe here, first of all, how important the tongue is. It is called our glory in the Psalms of David;

James compares the tongue (iii. 1-10) to the bridle of a horse, to the helm of a ship, to a fiery wheel and to an untamable wild beast, and he assures us that if we are able to guide aright this little member we can easily control all the actions of our lives. He that commands the bridle controls the horse; he that stands at the helm guides the ship as he pleases; and he who can govern his tongue can make his way through the sea or the wilderness of human life. The tongue, too, is the symbol of the language of eloquence ("*Concedat laurea lingue*," Cicero, *Off.* i. 22) and of the human race itself. We are not forbidden to speak of nature and of natural phenomena; the whole circle of truth lies before and around us, and we may speak of it all—the Creator and the creation; the past, the present and the future; the events of time and the issues of eternity. We can see our God and Father in all, and draw edification and confidence from all. But let us never forget Him in whom the Father's purpose and the creation's hope, the events of time and the glories of the future world, are headed up and manifested, Jesus Christ our Lord, around whom, from Bethlehem to Mount Olivet and from thence to the heavenly throne, the angels of God pour forth their endless hallelujahs. Let us speak of him, and we are most likely to edify. His name is as ointment poured forth, and there is no balm like his cross for the wounded spirit. His name is sweet and soothing to the wounded spirit. We are accustomed to say and to sing,

"How sweet the name of Jesus sounds  
In a believer's ear!  
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds  
And drives away his fear."



We ministers of the gospel especially should remember the weighty resolution of the apostle: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world." He determined to know nothing among them save Jesus Christ and him crucified. This was edifying. The members will no doubt grow the more as they hear more and more of the strength and beauty of the Head. The Germans say sweetly—

"Drum, O Jesu, will ich dich,  
Immer lieben festiglich ;  
Du, O Jesu, sollst allein,  
Meiner Seele Alles sein." \*

Let us, then, seek, as Christian men, so to guide our tongues that we may honor the name of Jesus and edify his Church, which he has purchased with his blood. No lightness—it is unworthy of our name and profession as vain, frivolous, time-wasting conversation, beneath the dignity of sons of God and joint-heirs with Christ; no, not even the strokes of humor and the brilliant Atticisms which are naturally so attractive (see in Greek the "*fine turns*," Eph. v. 4)—should lead our minds away from the one great theme, the love of God to sinful man.

O thou great Linguist, thou pentecostal Fire, baptize us with the fiery baptism of thy love, that in our day and generation we may speak to the edification of men!

\* "Therefore, O Jesus, will I strongly love thee;  
Thou alone shalt be the All of my soul."

## X. GRIEVING THE HOLY SPIRIT.

*And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption* (ver. 30).

Here we have before us a whole volume of divine theology—the grieving, the person grieved, the sealing and the day of redemption. We can only lightly touch these great themes in passing.

The person grieved is the Holy Spirit of God, called so often, by way of distinction, “the Spirit” and “the Holy Spirit,” who sanctifies and ornaments and inhabits the living temple of God. He is in every conceivable way connected with the Father and the Son in the works of creation, redemption and providence (Rom. viii. 9; 1 Pet. i. 2; 2 Cor. iii. 17; Gal. iv. 6). He is connected with the Father and the Son in more than ninety passages, of which the following may be taken as specimens: Matt. xxviii. 19; 1 Cor. xii. 4–7; 2 Cor. xiii. 14; 1 Pet. i. 2; Jude 20; 1 John v. 7. He is connected with the person of the Father alone in such passages as the following: John xv. 26; Acts v. 3; and with Jesus Christ the Mediator in Rom. ix. 1; xv. 20; 1 Cor. vi. 11; and many others. In these and other such passages he is represented as the divine Person whose office it is to perpetuate and complete the purposes of eternal love. He is described as a person; he is occupied in the works of creation, providence and redemption; he sends messages and messengers to the churches; and he is himself sent by the Father and the Son; he works miracles, casts out devils and comforts those that mourn; he is grieved, quenched and resisted by our wicked works; and, what more than anything else proves *personality*, the blas-

phemy against him is more heinous than that against the Father and the Son, and never to be forgiven either in this life or in that which is to come.

Be sure, then, that the Holy Spirit is God, equal in all divine perfections with the Father and the Son. He is no mere abstraction, but a person who loves you with an eternal love and grieves over you with the bowels of tender compassion; you feel him sweetly drawing you to the cross and making your burdens of guilt dissolve there. When you hate sin and love righteousness, it is from him; when your heart is warmed with the love of God and man, so that you could joyfully die for the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is from him; when the heart is filled with adoring contemplations of the cross, so that the eye brightens with humble but immortal hopes and the tongue breaks forth in songs of praise, it is all from him—the life that flows in the body, the sap that circulates in the vine, the cement that makes strong the temple of God, the Comforter of all that mourn. When you reject the truth by which he would lead you to the skies; when you prefer the world and its passing vanities to the hopes of eternity; when darkness is dearer to you than light, discord than peace, death than life; when sin hardens and no tears of sorrow flow; when God calls and there is no response; when temptation comes and there is little or no faith to meet it; when death approaches and there is no preparedness for dying,—you may be sure, in all these cases, that you are grieving the Holy Spirit and piercing yourselves through with many sorrows.

The great final, condemning sin was ever against the Holy Spirit, and ever must be, for he is the last wit-

ness given to the sons of men. The inhabitants of the old world resisted him in the days of Noah, and the Flood came and took them all away; the Jews resisted him on Pentecost, and the Romans speedily destroyed their temple and broke their nation to pieces. In the last days, too, he shall be resisted, grieved and quenched most awfully, until vengeance shall overtake the ungodly at the coming of the Lord (2 Thess. i. 8, 9).

In the mean time, he is seeking *to seal us* unto the day of redemption. (See Eph. i. 13; 2 Cor. i. 22.) But what is this sealing of the Spirit? Vessels were sealed, so we are the vessels of God's mercy, sealed and preserved for the Master's use; letters are sealed, so we are to be the epistles of his manifold wisdom, the sealed, commissioned messengers of his grace to the world. His seal is upon us (Rev. vii. 2; 1 Kings xxi. 8; Cant. viii. 6), and we are required to be faithful to him in the great mission of mercy to mankind. The seal is always the pledge of the truth of what is promised, and so the Holy Spirit is the great seal of the Father's purpose and the Son's dying love. The day of Pentecost was the seal set by God upon the truth, importance and glory of the work of Christ in our nature. The sealing of the Spirit is the work that distinguishes the sheep of the great Shepherd. They are his, he purchased them; and the fruits of the Spirit are the seal and the sign that they belong to him, and not to another. They bear his mark, and cannot be taken for the property of a stranger.

But what is the progress of this sealing?

There are five steps in it. He begins the sealing in the *conviction* of sin; he deepens the impression in our

full *conversion* to God ; the image on the seal becomes brighter and more distinct in the full *assurance* of faith : then comes *death*, and we are taken into the presence of the Son of God, being made like him in all the feelings and all the faculties of our souls. We are still imperfect, however, until the reunion of soul and body in the morning of the resurrection, and hence the sealing shall be perfected at the coming of the Lord, when, in body and soul being made like our Master, we shall see him as he is and be with him and be like him in his glory for ever.

This is the end of the sealing, brother, and this is the *day of redemption* unto which you are sealed (Rom. viii. 23 ; Eph. i. 14). We are already redeemed by price, we shall then be redeemed by power ; now the sting and the power of sin are taken away, then the power and oppression of Satan shall be broken, then death shall be destroyed and the author of sin and death shut up for a thousand years in the bottomless pit, so that the kingdom of righteousness and peace may fill the whole world. The two comings of Christ are the two poles of the Christian system, and they are both called, with equal truth, "the day of redemption." The former was the hope of the Jews ; the latter is the hope of the Christians. The cross is the foundation on which we rest ; the crown of righteousness at the coming of the Lord is our animating hope in the battles of the faith. Hence the constant cry for the day of redemption alike from the souls under the altar in heaven and from the persecuted saints upon the earth : Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. May the good Lord make us ready to meet him when he comes ! May the Holy Spirit seal us unto the day of redemption !

“Veni, Sancte Spiritus,  
 Reple tuorum corda fidelium,  
 Et tui in eis ignem accende,  
 Qui per diversitatem linguarum cunectarum  
 Gentes in unitate fidei congregasti.  
 Alleluia! Alleluia!” \*

## XI. BITTERNESS, ANGER, WRATH, CLAMOR, ETC.

*Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice (ver. 31).*

There seems to be a climax in this summary of evil passions. He begins with *bitterness* (*pikria*, “points,” “pricks,” “pikes;” the adjective from it means “sharp”), which refers to sourness of temper, the spirit of complaint, which sees all things from a false position and judges all persons, events and things according to narrow-minded prejudices and preconceived opinions. This *pikria* may not be a passion which leads to wars and commotions, but it can make the family circle very unlike the heaven which it should typify. The bitter-minded man has *points* and *corners* which you are in danger of infringing at every turn; there is no yielding to the opinion of others, or, if so, it is done with a bad grace and in bitterness, so that the deference has only increased the vinegar or the venom of the heart. This is the *mevarah* of the Hebrews, which signifies the sourness of unripe grapes (Deut. xxxii. 32), the bitterness of gall and the poison of the serpent. Indeed,

\* “Come, Holy Spirit,  
 Fill the heart of thy faithful ones,  
 And kindle in them thine own fire—  
 Thou who through the diversity of all languages  
 Hast congregated the Gentiles in the unity of the faith.  
 Hallelujah! Hallelujah!”

among the Jews *bitterness* and *poison* were, both in the mind and in the language, connected with each other. Nothing is more unlike the patient, loving character of Christ than this spirit of bitterness. It is opposed to the love which believeth all things, hopeth all things and beareth all things. It has no oil to pour upon troubled waters, no soft, kind answers to turn away wrath, no sweet, mild, winning looks to soothe the asperities of human life. You must lay aside all this bitterness: it is not the characteristic of a Christian.

*Wrath* and *anger* are often associated in the Scripture, and cannot easily be distinguished (Col. iii. 8; Heb. xi. 27; Rev. xii. 12). They are violent, fierce passions which overbear the control of reason; they unhinge the mind and destroy for the time the reasoning and reflective faculty. The Christian should put them away as being unworthy of the name and character which he bears. Love, and not anger, must rule in his heart; patience, and not wrath, must have her perfect work. Let the same mind be in you which was also in Christ, who when he was reviled reviled not again, and when he was buffeted threatened not. Let truth, holiness and love flow toward heaven in a still and peaceful course unruffled by the winds and the gusts of passion. The rock beneath us is steadfast, the heaven above us is serene, and the God whom we love and serve is of one mind for evermore. Why, then, should we allow the cares of the world or the raging of the enemies or the attacks of the devil to stir up our minds to anger and wrath? The patient Lamb, bearing his cross to Calvary, is not the type and leader of such. Neither, beloved, should you lift up your

voice in the streets nor join the tumultuous populace in clamor and controversy (Acts xxiii. 9; Eph. iv. 31). The noisiest rivers are not the deepest, and the Lord was not in the storm nor in the earthquake, but in the still, small voice.

*Evil speaking*, also (Greek, *blasphemy*), is forbidden by the royal law of love under which we dwell. Blasphemy here means slander, calumny or intentional defamation of character, and it may well stand at the top of the climax. You began with bitterness, and it has led you thus far; you are beyond the stages of anger and wrath and clamor, and are ready for the devil's diploma in the university of the damned. But I will restrain myself lest I become what I would lead you to avoid. The word *blasphemy* ("evil speaking") is used in reference to God and the Holy Spirit (Matt. xii. 31; xxvi. 65; Mark ii. 7; xiv. 64; Luke v. 21; John x. 33; Rev. xiii. 5, 6) as well as to our fellow-men, and in both cases it consummates the guilt of the wicked.

This gives the tongue a fearful importance, and may well justify the striking language of the apostle James (iii. 3-10). How noble is the right use of the tongue! A good converser (there are only a few historically celebrated ones in English history); a faithful preacher, such as Paul was and such as Cowper described (*Task*, book ii.); a public orator in the high places of the land, leading the destinies of nations and having for his audience, one may say, the civilized world,—these are examples of the wonderful power of the tongue and of the estimate in which the right use of it is held among men. Even so cruel, accursed and execrable is the bitter, lying, boastful, clamorous,



calumnious tongue, and it is, or ought to be, in an equal degree detested and despised.

All these evil monuments of the old man are to be put away from the saints, with all *malice* or ill-will. *Kakia* ("badness") has two representatives in Hebrew. (See Ex. xxxii. 11, 12; Isa. xxix. 20.) Xenophon makes it the cowardice of the soldiers (*Cyr.* 2, 2, 27), and in the New Testament it means malice or malignity (1 Cor. v. 8; Col. iii. 8; Tit. iii. 3). This seems to be the soil out of which all the others grow, the fallen condition of the natural heart in which so many evil passions find nourishment and scope. Be done with them all. In the name and strength of God, be done with them all! It is possible; grace can do it, and God himself commands it.

## XII. THREE GRACES.

*Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you* (ver. 32).

Kindness, tenderheartedness, forgiveness, are here presented to us as the attributes of the new man and the virtues which the faith of Christ inspires. These are some of the active duties which adorn the Christian character, in which all negative and positive excellence should unite together.

*Kind* and *tenderhearted* are to be distinguished only in degree, as they both show the beneficent operations of divine mercy and love. The latter is much the stronger of the two (well-boweled—viz., having yearning compassion, 1 Pet. iii. 8), and denotes the pitying, grieving affection with which love looks upon misery. These are indeed noble graces, and tell at once the

fountain from which they flow, even the forgiving love of God in Jesus Christ our Lord—forgiving one another even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you. Oh, noble conduct, and still nobler motive! Forgive one another as *God in Christ* (so the Greek) hath forgiven you!

Stripped of all ornament and seen simply by the eye of the intellect, the verse teaches the following propositions: (1) All forgiveness of sin is the act of God's grace; (2) This act takes place through the mediation of Christ; (3) Christians are to be adorned with the noblest moral virtues; (4) These moral virtues are based upon, or flow from, the revealed character of God; (5) Assurance, conviction, certainty, should be the condition of the believing soul: *God in Christ hath forgiven you.*

These five propositions contain more truth concerning God and man than is to be found in the entire literature of heathen Greece and Rome. Any one of these many times outweighs the speeches of Cicero and the orations of Demosthenes.

*God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.* It is a reprieve from the God of heaven, reaching the criminals on the road to the execution. It in a moment re-establishes the broken link between God and his creatures by restoring confidence and peace. Being forgiven, we then forgive; we are as certain that God has forgiven us as are others that we forgive them. He has done it, and we shall do it. Jesus, the Head, is the Receiver from the fount of divine Majesty: we receive the healing streams from him, not to appropriate them or conceal them, but to dispense the water of life to all around.

But observe here, brother-man, the first thing to make sure of is this: Has God forgiven thee? All other questions may well be kept in abeyance till this be answered, and this must be answered before you can be kind and forgiving to others.—May I, then—must I, then—know that my sins are forgiven?—You may, and you must if you would exercise the virtues of this verse.—But you are teaching the assurance of faith.—Well, yes, I am, and I now assert that *no believer in the New Testament ever expresses a doubt of his salvation.*—Never? Show me the text; I am open to conviction when I see the passage.—Mant's exposition of 1 Cor. ix. 27 is false, and the passage teaches the assurance of faith.—Then in that case I should say, "God has, for Christ's sake, forgiven *me*; Jesus Christ loved *me* and gave himself for *me*; what shall separate *me* from the love of God in Christ Jesus my Lord? I know that when he shall appear I shall be like him, for I shall see him as he is. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for *me* the crown of righteousness, which the Lord will give *me* at his coming. Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God."—Yes, my brother, such is the strain of the New Testament, and such should at all times be the language of the believer. The doubting faith (a contradiction) of modern times the holy Scripture knows nothing about, and neither did the Reformers of the sixteenth century. The Council of Trent, indeed, condemns this doctrine as Protestant, under the title of *vana fiducia hereticorum* ("the vain assurance of heretics").

But enough of this. Our text says, "Forgive, as

God in Christ hath forgiven you." Remember, the source of forgiveness is not simply *God*, but *God in Christ*—God dispensing his gifts and blessings through the Mediator whom he has appointed. Approach, then, and drink abundantly from the fount of mercy, for there is no lock on the door of the Father's house. He meets the prodigal and in fatherly embraces forgives him; so that there is no fear of repulsion or of refusal. This good, kind, forgiving God is ours, and we may well take refuge under the shadow of his wing.

## CHAPTER X.

Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children ; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savor. But fornication and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them. For ye were sometime darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth); proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. Wherefore he saith, Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess: but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church: and he is the Saviour of the body. Therefore as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the

washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church. For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.—EPHESIANS v.

Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honor thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with promise); that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free. And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.—EPHESIANS vi. 1-9.

THE fifth chapter of Ephesians, like the fourth, is entirely practical, and teaches the believing Church generally what is to be sought after and what is to be avoided. Jesus Christ is indeed ever present in the duties, trials and temptations of his Church, as well as in the doctrines, promises and hopes by which she is animated. "God in Christ" is the glorious centre round which revolves everything in the Church as well as in Scripture and the hearts of his people. It is with the Church as such we have here to do, as there is no reference to classes or offices till we come to the twenty-second verse, in which the apostle begins to treat of our social duties and relations. Let us, then,

with our hearts open to receive the truth wherever we find it and our eye upon God, who alone can teach it, examine this fine passage of practical theology, in which we shall see the apostle unfolding the relations in which God and Christ, sin and the sinner, the Church and holiness, stand to each other.

### I. IMITATORS OF GOD.

This first verse brings out the startling command or exhortation, "*Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children.*" The Greek has the stronger expression, *imitators*, which, indeed, is necessary to bring out the meaning and connection of the passage. The verse is closely bound to the one foregoing by the particle *therefore*, which shows the motive of the imitation to be God's forgiving love. God in Christ has forgiven you, and therefore, as dutiful and loving children, you are bound to imitate him. His will, his way and his purpose must be yours, so that one law and one life may pervade the whole family. Read carefully the following scriptures: 1 Cor. iv. 16; xi. 1; Eph. v. 1; 1 Thess. i. 6; ii. 14; Heb. vi. 12; 1 Pet. iii. 13.

There is, therefore, *an imitative principle* planted in the nature of man, and we have the following questions to ask concerning it.

*First. What is the source and origin of it?* We observe, in reply, that God in the beginning created us in one head; so that Headship is the very law and order in both the kingdom of nature and the kingdom of grace. One life flows through the human family, and one blood unites them in a common brotherhood. This great principle has been, and is, fully developed in the history of mankind. We were all created in

Adam, and we all fell in his fall; Noah became the head of the world, and in him we escaped the deluge; Shem, Ham, Abraham, Ishmael, were all heads through whom the curse or the blessing flowed, and still continues to flow, upon their descendants. Jesus Christ is the Head of the new dispensation, and the universal law of our creation and preservation has been manifested and sealed in him. Here, then, we have the principle in its widest sense, inasmuch as the head and the members must resemble one another. What else are the family, the Church and the State but different circles of headship where imitation and obedience should be the rule? Besides, did not God create us in his image and likeness? He is a King, and he created us a royal race, from whom, notwithstanding the fall, God's kings and priests are to be taken (Rev. i. 6). He is a Father; paternity is a divine relation in the Godhead, and he has created the human family to manifest and develop it as a part of the image of God himself. What is the divine mystery of the Trinity? Is it not this—that there are three divine Persons in one divine nature? The principle is unity in diversity—*many in one*—three persons in one Godhead; all which is not more mysterious than the human race, which contains the same mystery of many persons in one and the same nature. If many human persons may exist in one human nature, surely three divine persons may exist in one divine nature. In fact, the human race is distinguished from the angels—is the monument in time which God has erected to the value and importance of the eternal generation of Christ. This, then, is the source of the imitative principle in us; we are created in his image by divine grace, and thus, even though



fallen, we are enabled to imitate him—indeed, cannot but imitate him, since his life is in us.

*Second. But what is the extent of it?* This is very great indeed. All language is acquired by imitation, so that without it the faculty of speech would be useless; all education depends on it; all trades, schools and professions proceed from it; without it the progress and the civilization of the human race would cease for ever and endless barbarism overflow the world. All this is only typical (as are all things) of the new and eternal life which, as believers, we receive from the God-Man in heaven. Grace uses all the channels and currents of our fallen nature and gives them a proper direction. The imitative principle was never so nobly developed as in the seed of life which Christianity sowed among the nations. Look down from the hills into the city of Nazareth, where the eye can distinguish the solitary Nazarene as he commences his public ministry; or see him in the midst of the twelve apostles, struggling against the wickedness of the world; or number the one hundred and twenty disciples who acknowledged him as their Master, and then follow this little band in affliction and persecution and cruel deaths, and see how, in spite of all opposition, the seed of righteousness grows and flourishes through tears and agonies and blood until Judaism is overthrown and heathenism is subjugated and Christianity ascends the throne of the Cæsars. It is the principle of imitation; like produces like in the great moral regeneration which proceedeth, and shall not cease till the great purpose of God be accomplished and the whole family be brought into their Father's house. It is the Spirit's work to make us imitators of God, as dear children.

May he speedily perfect this good work in the hearts of all his people!

“Lava quod est sordidum;  
Riga quod est aridum;  
Sana quod est saucium.”\*

Nor is there any reason to believe that this principle of assimilation shall cease with the present state of existence. No; we shall be growing up into the likeness and character of the adorable Jehovah for ever and ever—eternally approaching, and at an infinite distance still; always receiving, and ever becoming capable of receiving, more and more from the oceanfullness of our heavenly Father’s love.

*Third. The object is God.* This is most important, and distinguishes Christianity from all other systems. We are brought into contact with the divine Being himself, that the feeling and sense of his nearness may influence and purify our minds. We behold him, the Source of all goodness and perfection, in the face of Jesus Christ—God, our God, Creator, Redeemer and Father, who dwells among us as he did among the Israelites of old, and leads us with a surer guidance than the pillar and the cloud. Idolatry is a darkening of the character and the perfections of God; the many mediators of the papists are an attempt to remove the mind and heart from the direct and purifying presence of the living God; images, pictures, formalities and ritualism of every form are so many efforts of the natural corrupt heart to get away to a distance from the Holy One—to be relieved from the duty com-

\* “Wash our souls and make them clean;  
Fructify and make them green;  
Heal where they have wounded been.”

manded by the apostle: "Be ye therefore imitators of God, as dear children." The nearer we are to the Fountain of perfection, the more perfect we must be. The face never shines so brightly as when we remain long on the mount with God; and the very reason given for our becoming like the Redeemer in his kingdom is that we shall see him as he is (1 John iii. 2). Surely there is nothing so ennobling to the human character as the contemplation of the being and attributes, the wisdom, mercy and beneficence, of God. His universe and the laws which regulate its mysterious movements are a noble study, and one which tends to destroy the dwarfishness of our natural dimensions by giving us large and far-reaching thoughts. But we are here led to God himself, the Author and Sustainer of the mighty system—not the laws, but the Lawgiver; not the work, but the Workman; not the dull, dark masses of a cold materialism, but the living, personal, eternal God who gives it all its glory and all its beauty.

*Fourth.* Never forget, however, the important clause in the verse: "*As dear children.*" As such only can we imitate our heavenly Father. The child looks to the father for counsel and guidance, for fond protection and defence. We are made his children by faith in Christ and adopted into the family of God by grace. This is the adoption so often mentioned in the Scriptures—the new birth from above, the new nature and the new heart; it is the same in substance as conversion, repentance and the translation from darkness into the kingdom of light. All these are different sides of the same subject, and are intended to delineate in a various and striking manner the change that takes place in the soul when the prodigal returns to his

father. As his dear children we are to follow his Son whithersoever he goeth, knowing that all things shall work together for good to them that love him. He treats us as dear children, giving us all things richly to enjoy and holding out to our hopes the promises of a bright and glorious future. He opens the fountains of his mercy, and invites us to drink; he unites us to himself by his love, and says, "Follow me," "Imitate me."

This active service, however, is more especially mentioned in the second verse, which contains—

## II. THE WALK IN LOVE AND THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST.

*And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savor (ver. 2).*

It is remarkable how doctrines and duties are interwoven together in the Bible. The system of divine teaching differs from all human plans of education in this—that unity pervades diversity; and the doctrines of grace, which indeed are nothing but a delineation of the character of God, without any formal statement, without the least effort at theory and systematizing, are felt all-present everywhere as the compelling motive and vivifying principle of the whole. We have not one chapter on faith and another on works, one on the incarnation and another on the doctrine of the Trinity, as we find in human compositions. No; God is everywhere brought into contact with man. His love meets our coldness, his mercy meets our transgressions, and his Son's dying love is the motive of our service to him: "Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us."

*First.* Here the *believer's life is compared to a walk* (so in Hebrew, Prov. vi. 22), which denotes activity and energy as well as a distinct and definite direction. We have left Egypt on our journey for the heavenly country; and while there are enemies before and behind us, many difficulties in ourselves and our companions and in the nature of the road, we have still the manna from the heavens and the water from the rock, and the fiery pillar to lead us on. This is the same idea, differently expressed, which the *agon* or "race" suggests to the mind (Heb. xii. 1). This world is the stadium where the race-contests are exhibited in a nobler, grander manner than among the old Romans. The Greek *agon* (whence comes our "agonny") signifies the race, the fight, the struggle of the new man with the sins, temptations and afflictions of life; the runners are the professors of the Christian name; the course is the way of holiness—the blood-sprinkled path which Jesus trod; the spectators are the angels and the glorious cloud of witnesses that surround us; and the rewards are the crowns which the Saviour gives the conquerors—the crowns of life, of righteousness and of glory. This, too, seen from another point of view, is the battle of life, the spiritual warfare (1 Tim. vi. 12; 2 Tim. iv. 7) waged from the beginning between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent; the two kingdoms which divide the universe—the Cains and the Abels, the Sauls and the Davids, the goats and the sheep, the flesh and the spirit; a warfare not yet ended, nor to be ended till the Captain of our salvation comes from heaven. This walk must be in love; the pilgrimage, the battle and the race are all to be conducted in the spirit of holy love; and the motive is to

be found in the constraining love of Christ: "Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us."

*Second.* We now come to the *sacrifice of Christ*, which is the fullest manifestation of his love: "*He hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savor.*" It is not a little marvelous with what pertinacity some modern writers, even of the most orthodox kind, as Meier, Rückhert, Usteri and others, deny in this passage all reference to the expiation of Christ. De Wette does not deny it, but says it is not to be insisted upon. Even Olshausen admits that it is not the suffering, but the obedience, of Christ that is well-pleasing to God. (See Isa. liii. 10.)

Let us observe the words of the passage: "*He gave himself for us.*"

Take *for* here in whatever sense you please, it can refer only to the dying love of Christ. He gave himself *above* us to ward off the stroke of vengeance; he gave himself *instead* of us (Rom. v. 7, 8; Phil. i. 29) as the ransom to redeem the devoted victim; or he gave himself *on account of* us that by his death he might procure for us the blessings of the gospel. His giving himself for us can refer only to his death. In his life he gave us many gifts, such as the doctrines of grace, the assurance of his Father's love, the example of perfect holiness; but in his death he gave *himself* for us as an offering and a sacrifice to God. These two words show the fullness and the perfection of the expiation. All gifts and eucharistic oblations of the law (*phosphoræ*; *Mincha*) were fulfilled and ended in him, as well as the bloody sacrifices of the altar (*thusia*, Heb. v. 1; vii. 27; viii. 8; ix. 9, 23; x. 1, 11, 12, 26) which prefigured the great atonement. Christ our

Passover is sacrificed for us (1 Cor. v. 7), and this glorious expiation is well-pleasing to God. (Comp. Lev. i. 9; Gen. viii. 21.)

If God, the sovereign and moral Governor of the world, was not well pleased with the death of Jesus, his incarnate Son, as the vindicator and fulfiller of the broken law, why did he send him to assume our nature? Why were the ancient sacrifices appointed? and, above all, why is it written (Isa. liii. 10), "It pleased the Lord to bruise him"? Were the eyes of the Lord not open when the Jews and the Romans were preparing, in horrid mockery and scorn, their bleeding victim for the cross? or was his arm shortened that he could not save? Oh no, my brother! He saw it all, and his fatherly heart bore it all out of love to thee. Out of tender compassion to thee he allowed the Son, the eternal Son, to drink the bitter cup of death and vindicate the sanctions of a violated law. This is the doctrine of the cross in which Paul gloried, and which has ever been the attraction of weary and anxious souls; and so it must continue to be till sin ceases to be sinful or God to be holy. God forbid, therefore, that we should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto us and we unto the world.

Yes, O thou great Redeemer! we take refuge in thy cross and glory only in thine atoning death! Thou hast borne the curse for us, and in thy bitter pains we see thine own and thy Father's love to a sinful world. Help us, O Lamb of God that takest away the sins of the world! help us to serve and love thee more and more, until finally we enter into thy glorious kingdom! Amen.

### III. THE CHARACTER OF THE SAINTS; WARNINGS AND EXHORTATIONS (ch. v. 3-21).

The gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ requires the motives to be pure and the conduct upright. It is a holy gospel, and the fruits which it brings forth in the life and conversation must be the fruits of righteousness, which are to the praise and honor of our Father in heaven. The vices so common among the Greeks and Romans—which, indeed, were not only tolerated and winked at, but allowed and provided for by the state—must be rooted out from the soil of the heart by grace.

*First.* The first of these is *porneia*, “fornication”—a vice which in the ancient world prevailed universally, and in the time of Augustus had fearfully depopulated the empire. It prevents marriage and tends directly to the dissolution of all the bonds which hold society together. (For the evils of this vice and the Scripture denunciations against it, read Matt. xv. 19; Mark vii. 21; Rom. i. 29; 1 Cor. vi. 13, 18; vii. 2; 2 Cor. xii. 21; Gal. v. 19; Eph. v. 3; Col. iii. 5; 1 Thess. iv. 3; Rev. ix. 21; John viii. 41.) It is sufficiently distinguished from adultery (Matt. xv. 19; Mark vii. 21; John viii. 3; Gal. v. 19) in the Scripture, yet it is applied to the adulterer (Matt. v. 32; xix. 9) and to the incestuous person (1 Cor. v. 1). It is remarkable how often it is used mystically for *idolatry*, or forsaking the true God for idols, which is based on its application to the adulteress (Rev. ii. 14, 20; xvii. 2; xviii. 3-9). (Comp. Ezek. xxiii. 19; Hos. xi. 1.) Hence the apostate Church called Babylon, the seductress of the kings of the earth, is “the great *porne*, or whore,” which sit-



teth on the scarlet-colored beast, drunken with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus (Rev. xvii. 1-16; xix. 2). Thus the most terrible and blasphemous apostasy the world has ever seen is called fornication or whoredom, which shows the fearful enormity of the vice.

*Second. Uncleaness* is a wider term, and includes the former. "All uncleaness" no doubt refers here specially to the unnatural sins connected with the cities of the plain and to other similar enormities which degrade human nature beneath the instincts of the brute. These were common among the heathen, as their literature and remaining monuments of sculpture and statuary abundantly prove, and at the present day the whole Eastern world groans under the same enormous crimes.

The apostle adds *covetousness*, which, from its Greek derivation, signifies "having more," the desire to have more, or greed (Mark vii. 22; Luke xii. 15; Rom. i. 29; Col. iii. 5; 1 Thess. ii. 5; 2 Pet. ii. 3, 14). It means also extortion, the *amor sceleratus habendi* of the Latins, which the Scotch render "hell-fire greed;" and surely there is nothing more contrary to the character of the gospel and that of its divine Author. The covetous man is called an idolater (ver. 5). He has given up the God of the Bible and taken up with Plutus and Mammon as his master and rewarder, and his worship becomes more and more intense by the daily increase of his treasures. "*Amor pecuniæ crescit quantum pecunia ipsa crescit*"—viz., "His greed increases with his gain; his eye rests with delight on the golden god" (*Nunmos contemplor in Arca*, Horace, *Satires* i. 66) in whom his heart delights, and the true living God is forgotten. This is indeed idolatry, and

shuts out from the kingdom of heaven (Phil. iii. 19; Col. iii. 5).

These things are not to be named among the saints; the very mention of them is unbecoming the profession ye have made. Ye belong to him who is holy, and the words of your lips as well as the works of your hands should produce only works of righteousness. Hence (ver. 4) *filthiness* (base, vile words and actions) and *foolish talking and jesting*, fine turns in discourse, double meanings, urbanity in the bad sense of the word, attractive Atticisms,—all these are inconvenient and do not suit the character of the children of God. They must never be uttered in the meetings of the saints; all this is condemned by the pure morality of the gospel.\*

*Third.* Note also in this fifth verse the words “*the kingdom of Christ and of God,*” where in Greek the first noun, “Christ,” has the article, and the second, “God,” has not; and hence Bengel, Beza, Middleton and others translate “the kingdom of Him who is Christ and God” on the ground that if two persons were meant the article must be repeated before “God.” Harless, indeed, maintains that the words can have no other meaning, though he will not say that Paul meant that by them. So completely has the fear of critics mastered the love of orthodoxy! On which Meyer cries out, “Oh, weak and inconsistent exegesis! your

\* In verse 5, *ἐστέ* is by most modern critics rejected for *ἴστε*; the meaning is absolutely the same in both cases, but in the latter the Hebraism is very harsh and hardly justifiable by the laws of that language. The Hebrews say, “knowing ye shall know,” but never “ye shall know, knowing.” (See Acts vii. 34; Heb. vi. 14; Matt. xiii. 14.) If the authorities finally decide in favor of *ἴστε*, we shall have one of the most curious constructions in the New Testament.

criticism is false, Christ is not here called *God*. *θεος* ('God') needs no article; besides, Paul was too rigid a monotheist to call Christ 'God,' and he never does so in any one of his Epistles." This is just a single specimen of the sweeping assertions of German neological critics. This takes for granted many things that require to be proved: (1) That Paul did not write the Epistle to the Hebrews; (2) That *Theos* ("God") is not the correct reading in 1 Tim. iii. 16; (3) That Rom. ix. 5 should be read as a doxology; (4) That Paul was a more rigid monotheist than John, who is admitted to have called Christ "God;" and (5) Meyer takes for granted, in the sweeping assertion above mentioned, that his own interpretation of this verse is the right one. Now, I deny every one of these, and assert that they are every one false. Paul did write the Epistle to the Hebrews, and did call Christ "God" (i. 8, 9, 10); *God* is the correct reading in 1 Tim. iii. 16; Rom. ix. 5 cannot, according to the Greek language, be read as a doxology; John and Paul were of the same opinion concerning Christ, and both of them call him "God;" and, lastly, I defy Meyer to prove that *ὁ θεος καὶ Χριστός* must mean two persons. The Greek rule is this: "Two nouns joined together by *and*, the first having the article, and the second not, both refer to the same person."

Let us now consider the usage of the New Testament in this important matter. "God and Father" is a common phrase in Scripture, and it never signifies two persons, but one only (2 Cor. i. 3; xi. 31; Eph. i. 3; 1 Thess. i. 3; Col. i. 3; Rev. i. 6). In all these passages the first noun has the article, and the second has not; and they are both descriptive of the same person.

Now, I demand why *ὁ Χριστός καὶ Θεός*, “the Christ and God,” should be translated differently? So, I maintain, by the same rule, 2 Thess. i. 12 should be rendered “according to the grace of our God and Lord Jesus Christ.” This is the natural translation; and so strongly is it felt to be critically incapable of any other that Winer, forgetting his character as a critic, simply solves the difficulty by saying the apostle used *χρῖστος* for *ὁ χρῖστος*—that is, he wrote bad grammar and Winer will correct him, but he by no means intended to call Christ “God”! This, indeed, solves the difficulty, if there be any difficulty, but it does so by desecrating and corrupting the word of God. The same celebrated grammarian, in reference to Tit. ii. 13, says he finds ground in the doctrinal system of Paul for believing that the words “the great God and our Saviour” do not refer to one and the same person. But this is admitting that critically and grammatically they do: and this is indeed so manifest that, so far as I know, no critic, ancient or modern, has ventured to assert the contrary. It is easy to find reasons in our own minds or in our preconceived opinions for denying the Godhead of Christ; but when we interpret Scripture, we must follow the usages of language; and I repeat it: the kingdom of Christ and of God in this passage is “the kingdom of him who is Christ and God.” I say the same of Jude 4. The examples quoted by Meyer (1 Cor. vi. 9, 10; xv. 20; Gal. v. 21) are nothing to the purpose, if he could show that such forms as “he that eateth and drinketh” (John vi. 54), “he that seeth and heareth” (Rev. xxii. 8), “the Lord and Saviour” (2 Pet. ii. 20; iii. 18) and “God and Father” must necessarily refer to *two* persons, and not to one only.

Until this is done nothing is done, and we must continue to believe that the doctrine of the deity of Christ is not only very plainly stated in the word of God, but is so interwoven with the expressions of the apostles that it cannot be extracted without destroying the sense and significancy of the whole Scripture.

*Fourth.* But what is the *inheritance* of this fifth verse? It is that ennobling hope of glory from which the idolater is shut out, but which, brightening above the children of God, sustains them in their pilgrimage and gives them a foretaste of their eternal home (Acts xx. 32; Gal. iii. 18; Eph. i. 14, 18; v. 5; Col. iii. 24; Heb. ix. 15; 1 Pet. i. 4). The Israelites had their bondage and their deliverance; their iron furnace and the paschal lamb which redeemed them; their wanderings in the wilderness, with fearful difficulties contending, but guided by the pillar and fed by the manna from heaven; they murmured, rebelled and were very stiff-necked against the Lord and his servants, but the one great hope sustained them through it all and made them finally triumphant—the hope of the Promised Land, where they might serve the Lord in the beauty of holiness without fear. Oh, hope is indeed the solace of the wretched, the balm for all wounded and weary hearts. And have we too the hope of an inheritance, or has the coming of Christ to die for us exhausted all the fullness of God, so that all is now *faith* and there is nothing more to hope for? Oh no, brother, no! The ocean-fullness of Jehovah's grace and mercy and glory is not exhausted; new depths of love and new heights of glory will attract and entrance the enlarged and adoring mind for ever. We too have our manna and the streams from the spiritual rock; we

too have a heavenly country before us, where God is not ashamed to be called our God. We shall have a temple nobler than the beautiful house of old, where the Lord God and the Lamb shall be the light thereof; a palace with many mansions, where all the family of God shall dwell; a rest that remains for the people of God, of which Baxter hath spoken so sweetly; a common inheritance with all the saints in the goodness and bounty of our heavenly Father, in the love and likeness of our divine Master, for ever. This is the kingdom promised to the saints from the foundation of the world—not the kingdom of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, the kingdom of grace which we at present enjoy, but the kingdom of majesty, power and glory which we enter partially into the enjoyment of at death, and fully at the resurrection of the righteous dead, when the kingdom shall come and the glory of the Lord shall cover the whole earth.

These words, therefore, “the kingdom of Christ,” the reign of the Son of man, should fill our hearts with the highest hopes and the noblest aspirations. This is the day of man (1 Cor. iv. 3, Greek), that is the day of Christ; now sin prevails, then righteousness shall prevail; Satan is now seeking whom he may devour, then he shall be shut up and imprisoned for a thousand years; now sin mars or sullies all the noblest work and efforts of men, then holiness, love and joy shall fill all hearts and the presence and blessing of the all-perfect God shall make all things else perfect. Death shall not divide us any more, temptation shall not beset us any more, anger and wrath no longer trouble our blessedness; our day shall no more decline and the night of our sorrow shall be ended. We shall

be with the King whom here on earth we loved and served in weakness and in tears, even Jesus Christ, the Beloved of our souls, in whom all beauty, holiness and perfection meet: more wonderful, more lovely, more adorable, from the contrasts and extremes which are realized in his person—lowliness and majesty; manhood in its purity and Godhead in its vastness; the tears of sympathy for our woes and the eyes of fire to wither up iniquity; the Lion and the Lamb united; the Sceptre-Bearer of the world and the Burden-Bearer of our sins; the Son of the Virgin, the Son of Abraham, the Son of David, the Son of man and the Son of God.

O thou King of glory, how we desire to see thee! How beautiful art thou in thy kingdom! Come, O thou Beloved of our souls, come quickly! Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus!

*Fifth.* We come now to the *vain words* of the sixth verse, which very probably were the delusive assertions of Greek philosophers and sophists, having no reality of truth in them. (See Matt. xii. 3; Luke xx. 10, 11.) *Vain* also means “fruitless,” “without effect” (Acts iv. 25; 1 Cor. xv. 10, 14, 58; 1 Thess. ii. 1); and these philosophical babblings could produce no fruit to the benefit of man or to the honor of God. In our text the word rather means fallacious, deceptive (Col. ii. 8; comp. Ex. v. 9; Hos. xii. 1, Septuagint), lying words, by which, from without or from among themselves, they might be led to abandon the hopes of the gospel. They were thus exposed to the wrath of God, the punishment due to the children of disobedience.

But is there wrath in God? Ask the angels whom he cast down to Tartarus and still retains in chains;

ask the flaming cherubim who banished Adam from Paradise; ask the antediluvians who perished in the Deluge; ask the cities of the plain as the devouring element consumes them; ask the scattered nation of Israel, stripped and peeled and wasted by the curse of eighteen hundred years! There is fierce, burning wrath in God against all ungodliness and transgression. The coming of Christ is to be in flaming fire to take vengeance on ungodly man; the Scripture doctrine of hell shows the anger of God against sin; and why does the natural conscience tremble at the idea of a righteous and holy God? Why the thousand shifts to which it resorts in order to appease him? Be assured, then, that there is wrath in God, and that the finally impenitent shall not escape his vengeance.

*Sixth. Darkness and light (ver. 7, 8, 9). Be ye not partakers with them.* Why should you give up the noble hopes of the gospel for the lying promises of deceivers and seducers, seeing that by experience ye know that the end of these things is death? Ye were formerly darkness, and the enemy of your souls seeks again to entangle you in the by-ways of delusion. Our natural state is darkness; there is no light in the hidden depths of the soul by which she can ascend out of the turmoil and destruction that rage around her into the liberty and dignity of a life well-pleasing to God. All the civilization of which the heathen nations can boast is but the whitewashing of a nauseous sepulchre—the speckled, glittering skin which the serpent has put on; but the poisonous venom flows through the veins notwithstanding, and must continue to flow and augment there if the Serpent-Bruiser should not follow the footsteps of the destroyer and



expel the corrupting element by the light of life. He has done so in your case, and his blessed word declares, "Ye are the light of the world." This is nothing else than the change of heart and life indicated by the various Scripture expressions "new name," "new nature," "new heart," "new birth," "faith," "repentance," "conversion," and such-like, which are all based upon the great truth that nature can do nothing for us and grace must do everything; that there is, in fact, no hope of peace or prosperity for us, here or hereafter, until, yielding to the entreaties of divine mercy, we are translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son. How glorious the name! How high the privileges! Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us—that we should be called the sons of God. Do not deceive yourselves with the hopes of the children of God if ye are walking in darkness; for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness and truth. His presence in the children of God is made manifest by their love of truth, holiness and goodness.

Manifold and various are the clusters of this spiritual fruit (fruit, not fruits) which adorn the branches of the living Vine (Gal. v. 22). He is the life of the dead heart; the sap that flows through the trees of God; the blood that circulates in the mystical body; the cement of the temple of God. Like the wind, he breathes upon the dry bones and regenerates them; like the oil of gladness, he medicates the wounded Samaritans; like the fire of Pentecost, he baptizes us with burning love to God and man; like the dewdrops of the morning or the rain upon the mown grass, he revives the heritage of God when it is weary. He is

the Fertilizer, the Restorer, the Fruit-Bringer, the Comforter, whose work is in the hearts of believers, even as Jesus the Mediator, who sent him, has his place and his work at the right hand of the Father in heaven. Jesus prepares the place, and the Spirit prepares the person; Jesus by his expiation removes all barriers that prevented divine mercy from reaching us, and the Spirit by drawing us to the cross removes the impediments which would keep us from receiving it; Jesus gives the food, and the Holy Spirit the appetite to enjoy it. Hence it is that when walking as the children of God and bringing forth the fruit of the Spirit we are able to prove what is acceptable to the Lord.

*Seventh.* This *acceptability* (ver. 10) is the very highest and noblest of all human attainments, and in proportion as it is sought for and reached marks the progress of the soul in the life of faith. To be living or dead is of comparatively little importance, seeing a very few years at the longest must end this mortal state; wherefore we labor that, whether absent or present, we may be accepted of him (2 Cor. v. 9). This is the important end and business of life—even so to regulate our thoughts, words and actions in the fear and love of God that our whole life may be pleasing to him. Our sleep reminds of the sleeping of the saints in Jesus; our rising, clothing, washing and reunion in the morning are the daily types and anticipations of the purity, freshness and beauty of the saints when they shall assemble around the Lord in the morning of the resurrection. Our morality is pure and holy; we hate even the garments spotted by the flesh, and our great aim, in life and death and all things, is to please God.

*Eighth. Works of darkness* (ver. 11, 12). Hence, our fellowship is with him, and not with the “*unfruitful works of darkness.*” (See 1 Tim. v. 20.) These are the works of man in his unrenewed state, and the apostle assures us they are unfruitful, they are not well-pleasing to God. These are the dead works (Heb. vi. 1; ix. 14) which do not spring from faith, and which lead men to destruction (Rom. vi. 21; viii. 12; Gal. vi. 8; Eph. iv. 22). These are the “wicked works” (Col. i. 21) and the “works of the flesh” (Gal. v. 21) which are directly opposed to the fruit of the Spirit and manifest the carnal mind, which is enmity against God. Have no fellowship with them; reject them, condemn them, reprove them.

The twelfth verse gives the reason: “*For it is a shame even to speak of those things that are done of them in secret.*” The very mention of their crimes is scandalous. What these enormities were is manifest in the history of heathenism, and Paul refers to some of them (Rom. i. 22-32). It is well, however, to observe that the words *in secret* take for granted the existence of an original conscience in man, which, however dark in itself and darkened by evil habits, is not willing to have the light of day thrown in upon its doings. They are ashamed to be known as the authors of such evil deeds, and honest men are ashamed even to name them. How, then, shall they meet God? What must be their shame and confusion before the judgment-seat of Christ! This is the deadening nature of sin, that it seeks concealment and cannot endure the presence of God, while the ennobling aim of the Christian is to do what is pleasing in his sight. The man without the wedding-garment was speechless. The awe-struck cou-

science will at last stand silent under the overwhelming consciousness of guilt. May God deliver us from the guilt and power of sin!

The thirteenth verse has given the critics not a little to do, and those who wish to see their opinions may consult Meyer. Our English translation is clear and consistent; and if the text can be proved to bear it, the difficulty is removed. The more natural translation of the last clause, however, is this: "Whatsoever is made manifest is light"—viz., belongs to the light, or, as Olshausen says, is changed into light.

*Ninth. The gospel call.* "Wherefore he saith, Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light" (ver. 14). The formula "wherefore he saith" does not refer to any passage in the Old Testament which Paul here quotes, for there is no such passage. Harless and Olshausen try to refer it to Isa. lx. 1, but without success. De Wette insinuates that it was a slip of the apostle's memory, which surely borders on irreverence. Better say, with Calvin and others, that the apostle speaks as the representative and the ambassador of God, thus: "Wherefore he, God, now speaking in me, saith, Awake, thou that sleepest," etc. Campbell supplies the word *gospel*: "Wherefore the gospel saith," etc. Others put in the word *Scripture*: "Wherefore the Scripture saith," etc., meaning the Scripture generally, and not any particular passage. It is, however, far more important to attend to the substance than to the mere form of the address, and we learn from it three important truths.

(1) That the natural man is asleep, and requires to be wakened; dead, and requires the power of God to quicken him; a child of wrath (Eph. ii. 3), and needs

the pardoning mercy of God. This is the weighty doctrine of Paul and of the whole Scripture, and upon it rest the need and the necessity of a Redeemer.

(2) The will of man must concur with the power of God in this awakening from the sleep of death; he must attend to the voice of his Father's love; he must drink of the streams which grace has opened; he must receive the gift which the Creator sends, or he cannot become a son (John i. 12); he must obey the authority which says to him, "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?" This is an important truth, and is everywhere taken for granted in the Bible.

(3) Jesus Christ is the Light-Giver, and he graciously promises to supply all their need in the assurance, "Christ shall give thee light." Thee, my brother—he will give *thee* light. To thee his call is directed; thy soul is dear to him, for he bore thee on his bosom on the cross when he died. His eye is upon thee; his ear is open to thy call; and now the very voice of God says, "Awake, arise, and Christ shall give thee light." He is truly the Light of the world, and truth, holiness and peace follow in the train of his gospel. Compare Europe with Africa and see what blessings, temporal as well as spiritual, the gospel brings to the nations. Compare Britain with Spain and Italy and see what ennobling effects the free use of the Scriptures has upon the kingdoms of the world. Shine forth, O thou Sun of righteousness, upon the dark places of the earth, that the whole world may be filled with thy praise! There is no light to irradiate the chamber of the heart or the mansion of the tomb; none but thine, O Lord, to guide us safely in the bitter waters of death. Shed forth the beams of

thy beauty, O thou Light and Joy of the whole world, and let us now walk in the light; for the night cometh when no man can work.

*Tenth. As wise.* "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (ver. 15). Wisdom, next to love, is one of the noblest, sweetest virtues, and for the daily affairs of life much more important than power or high attainments in understanding. The ancient Greeks boasted that they were the σοφοι ("sophists"), the *wise* men of the world, and thought, no doubt, that wisdom would die with them. Pythagoras, one of the wisest of them, saw their presumption and modestly took the name of "friend of wisdom" (*philosophos*), or *philosopher*, which has descended to our time, having lost the original signification only so far as that denoted modesty. The Druses of Mount Lebanon make the same division of mankind, calling the initiated into their mysteries *Akkal*, "the wise men," and the uninitiated *Jehhal*, "the fools," for whom there is no salvation. This same division runs through the word of God also, and makes the only radical, permanent distinction among the children of men. We have the *wise* and the *foolish* virgins, the wheat and the tares, the sheep and the goats, the good and the bad, the new and the old man, the renewed and the unrenewed. This is the dividing-line to which God looks in the day when he makes up his jewels, and he regards no other. The rich and the poor, the learned and the ignorant, the civilized and the semi-barbarous, are of little account before him. The national distinctions of which we make our boast, the various Church parties who are divided by names, clauses (*Filioque*

divides the East from the West) and partition-walls which God never built, are all sunk and submerged in the one radical division of which heaven and hell are born—the *wise* and the *foolish*, those with oil in their lamps and those without it. Grace or no grace, faith on the Son of God or no faith,—that is the question which divides the species, and shall divide them for evermore.

See, then, that ye walk circumspectly—*accurately, pointedly*, on the *points*, the *steps*, the promises—looking well where you set your feet. Such is the idea of the Greek. See then *how* ( $\pi\omega\tau$  never means “that”) ye walk circumspectly—viz., see in what manner ye can best attain the end in view, to walk circumspectly, redeeming the time, for the days are evil. So De Wette, Beza, Luther and almost all the translators.

*Eleventh. Evil days.* “*Redeeming the time, because the days are evil*” (ver. 16). In the days of the apostles the followers of the Lord were surrounded with evils of the most appalling kind. Judaism was their mortal enemy and diligently sought their destruction; heathenism treated them as miscreants detested by gods and men—heathenism in all its developments, with its established rites and gorgeous ceremonies and stately temples and proud traditions of conquest, stability and glory. Like their Master, they had not where to lay their heads. They had, indeed, faith, which kept them above the surging elements by uniting them with the Son of God in heaven, but, so far as this world was concerned, they were of all men the most miserable (2 Cor. vi. 3–12). They were hunted, rejected, despised, crucified. Their life was a continual martyrdom, and their death was the triumph of faith. They shunned

the waves of iniquity by the sacrifice of their lives, and after multitudes were slain the blood of the martyrs became the seed of the Church and the Lord brought to naught all the counsels of their enemies. The days may be more or less evil at different times, but the whole period of the Bridegroom's absence, when the friends of the Bridegroom should fast (Matt. ix. 15), are evil days. These are the "last days" (Heb. i. 2), and the "latter times" (1 Tim. iv. 1), and the "last times" (1 Pet. i. 20), and the "day of man" (1 Cor. iv. 3, in the Greek), and the "last hour" (1 John ii. 18, meaning of the present age; see John v. 25, 28, where "hour" means a long period), and the "present evil age" (*aiou*, Gal. i. 4), from which Christ died to deliver us. Thus the whole "course or age" (*αιων του κοσμου*, Eph. ii. 2) "of the world," from the beginning until the second advent, is characterized as evil, inasmuch as the life-and-death struggle of the two kingdoms is going on in it, and sin is increased and multiplied in it, and death the destroyer triumphs over us during it, and Satan the roaring lion continues to rage against us until the evil days are ended. Hence the hope of the Church is ever directed to the coming, when the new age is to begin and underneath us is to rise a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. Till sin be restrained by the power of almighty God, till death be obliterated from the bodies and souls of believers, till Antichrist and his faction be swept from the face of the earth and given to the burning flame (Rev. xix. 20; Dan. vii. 11), till Satan, the liar, be imprisoned in the bottomless pit, I see no prospect of an end to these evil days—none, none! On the contrary, the evil is to increase more and more, and love is to wax



colder and colder, and Satan is to roar and rage the more vehemently, as the time of the end approaches. It is the delusion of the present age that we are riding victoriously into millennial blessedness on the back of a progressive series of moral and religious ameliorations! What a delusion! How contrary to the word of God! What! a reign of righteousness before Antichrist is slain and the devil cast out? No, my brother! The days are evil still; therefore let us watch and be diligent, redeeming the time. No rest save the rest of faith till the Rewarder comes with many crowns upon his head; no folding of the arms to sleep while grace is free and souls are perishing. Oh that we felt in reality the evil of these days! Oh that we understood what the Lord would have us to do!

*Twelfth. The will of the Lord.* “Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is” (ver. 17). The argument of the apostle is this: Sin abounds, the days are evil, wherefore be not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. Ye must discern the signs of the times that ye may ascertain the will of God therein, as ye judge of the nearness of the summer by the budding of the fig tree (Matt. xxiv. 32. 33). He speaks to us no more from the top of Sinai; no more do his prophets bear their heavy burdens to the nations; no longer does a miraculous apostolic ministry relieve our doubts and silence our fears. Nature holds on her silent course uninterrupted by the arrests of her Master’s hand. We have the Bible without us and the Spirit of God within us, and with these we must seek to understand what is the will of the Lord. Our testimony must suit the times. This is a word especially given to pastors. Ye should know the will

of the Lord as to the state of your churches, and act accordingly; the slumberers must be awakened, the presumptuous must be checked and the superstitious must be led to the simplicity of the gospel. In a sleepy, lethargic age the testimony must go forth on the winds of heaven, and with a voice of thunder, to shake the pillows from all arm-holes and arouse the sleeping virgins to a sense of their danger. In an age like the present, when all powers are stirring themselves and preparing for the conflict, infidelity, superstition and tyranny—the leaven of the Sadducee, the leaven of the Pharisee and the leaven of Herod—all working in the heaving mass and waiting for the moment when the angels that restrain them shall let loose the tempests upon the earth,—oh, in such a time we who bear the name of Jesus should not be as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time and understanding what is the will of the Lord. Let us put on the whole armor of God, that we may be able to stand fast in the evil days!

*Thirteenth. The contrast: wine and Spirit.* “*And be not drunk with wine wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit*” (ver. 18). In this train of thought the apostle mentions one disgusting vice which is particularly to be avoided—namely, drunkenness—inasmuch as it gives full license to the lusts of the flesh and leads to all kinds of debauchery. It was a very early practice, and it continues to have a very extensive sway in the world. (See Prov. xx. 1; xxiii. 2, 30; Isa. v. 11, 22; Luke xxi. 34.) The vine is one of the good gifts of God, and in many countries, but especially in the East, it supplies, not the rich with an article of luxury, but the common people with an extensive article of food. It is not the use, but the abuse, of wine

which is forbidden. Mohammed, indeed, did not see this distinction, for he forbade wine altogether in every form, though many of his followers disregard his injunctions. In the East I have seen few instances of intoxication; the wines are light and healthful, though certainly a great quantity would intoxicate. The best and finest old wines are found in the convents of Mount Lebanon, where the monks are always well supplied.

The evils of drunkenness are these: It relaxes the powers of reason and self-government; it degrades, stupefies and brutalizes the character; it wastes time and money and bodily and mental vigor; it ruins the temper of the mind and the peace of the family, the comfort of the wife and the prospects of the children and the hopes of a glorious future. It is, in fact, as this verse teaches, the devil's mockery and mimicry of the joy, power and consolation of the Holy Ghost. The drunkard is deceived, imagining that he is great and wise and excellent, that he is what he is not and can do what he cannot, which is nothing but the Satanic imitation of being filled with the Spirit of God, by whom the believer obtains real power to accomplish what nature never could, and joy of heart far surpassing anything this world can afford. This power and presence of the Holy Ghost in the hearts of believers is the compensation which the Lord has given us to make up for the loss of the Saviour's personal presence (John xiv. 16, 17), and the person and personal offices of the Comforter—his operations both in the head and in the members, as well as his constant intermediating between them—are fully and frequently described in the Holy Scriptures.

This passage says, "Be filled not with wine, but with the Holy Ghost." The Church is the body of Christ, and the Holy Ghost is the quickening Spirit that anoints it; the Church is the vessel of God's mercy, and he is the Water of Life held forth in it to the thirsty world (Acts i. 5; ii. 4; vi. 5; vii. 55). He is indeed a blessed Comforter to guide and glorify the children of God. He is the last gift of the Father to the children of men; whose witness being rejected, there is none to come after him, and nothing remains for the desolate bosom but an eternity of darkness and despair. Oh what love, what grace, from our God and Father, what tenderness and compassion in our Lord Jesus Christ, are revealed to us in the exhortation, "Be ye filled with the Spirit"! The Father has promised the heavenly gift from the times of old; Jesus, the Son, the risen King and Lord of mankind, has ascended to the right hand of God to shed abroad the gifts of the Spirit as he pleases; and now the exhortation reaches your ears, "Ask and receive, that your joy may be full." The fountain overflows, and if ye perish it is your own doing; the fullness of the Holy Ghost is presented to your acceptance, and if ye remain cold and comfortless and alienated from God it is by putting away from you the overtures of your Father's love. Be filled with the Spirit. Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die? There is bread for the prodigal, and water for the thirsty soul, and life eternal in the merciful heart of God for you all. Hell was not made for you, but for the devil and his angels. There is no right in hell for any of you, and nothing but your blindness and impenitency can send you there! Again I say, "Be filled with the Spirit." Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?

*Fourteenth. Heart-melody.* “*Speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord*” (ver. 19). This spiritual joy, which the Holy Spirit imparts, shall burst forth in holy words, heavenly prayers and melodious singing in their hearts to the Lord, as Pliny the heathen tells us the Christians were accustomed to do in the primitive times (*Epist.* x. 97): “*Carmen Christo quasi Deo dicunt*” (“They sing hymns to Christ as a God”). This fullness of the Spirit leads to “*speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.*” There can be no doubt that the word *Lord* here refers to Christ, and the same idea is more fully asserted in the twentieth verse: “*Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*” Jesus Christ is the prominent object of love, reverence and adoration in the Christian worship, and to the wonders of his redemption every earnest, thoughtful heart beats responsive.

These psalms and hymns and spiritual odes are not to be artistically distinguished, nor do they refer to the collections of primitive psalmody or to ecclesiastical hymn-books. They were not songs of human composition, but the outbursts of praise direct from the heart as the Spirit gave utterance to the worshipers. This may have been in their worship (1 Cor. xiv. 15, 16); or it may have been in their quiet meetings for mutual encouragement and edification; or it may have been at midnight, when the dungeon enclosed them and their feet were fast in the stocks (Acts xvi. 25). The early Church, having to contend with such fearful enemies, was endowed by her Head and Redeemer with

such a glorious fullness of the Spirit that the indwelling life was ever breaking forth in streams of adoration and praise. Every need was provided for and every difficulty overcome by this mighty endowment, which included all the gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor. xii.) for the ministry of the apostolic Church, the gift of languages for unbelievers, the ninefold fruit of the Spirit (Gal. v. 22) for the Church universal; and for the psalmody the provision was simple and sufficient, even the outbursting joy of the indwelling Spirit in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. It is possible some of the psalms of David may have been used. *Hymns* means simply songs of praise. *Ode* seems to be more general and worldly, for the apostle qualifies it by the word *spiritual*. The same order is observed in Col. iii. 16. "Ode" is found in the following passages: Eph. v. 19; Rev. v. 9; xiv. 3; xv. 3. The practice referred to in 1 Cor. xiv. 26 seems to show that the word *psalms* has some reference to the Jewish psalmody; and this is still more probable from the fact that the mode and system of worship passed from the synagogue service into the early Christian Church.

*"Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God"* (ver. 20, 21).

The twentieth and twenty-first verses are a continuance of the same subject, but they show the relations of the Church to the Father and the Son. We learn from them the following truths: (1) That thankfulness is the natural expression of the believing heart, and it should be exercised perpetually. (2) The object of all our thankfulness is the God and Father of our Lord

Jesus Christ. This phrase, "God and Father," in Greek and in English, can refer to only one person, and is another confirmation of the rule which we sought to establish when considering verse 5 of this chapter. (3) Our prayers, praises and thanksgivings should all be in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We approach God in the name of Christ, which is the same as *through* the merits and mediation of Christ (Col. iii. 17). In Christ, in the name of Christ, through Christ, for the sake of Christ,—all show the principle of mediation, and may be used indifferently in our praises and our prayers.

*Fifteenth.* In verse 21 the apostle ends these general exhortations with the principle of deference and *submission one to another in the fear of God*. No place for pride; no personal superiority of gifts must be permitted to impede the free circulation of brotherly love among the saints. They have much to learn in the school of Christ, and one of the deepest lessons of his love is to bear one another's burdens and be submissive one to another in the fear of God. We are very partial in our judgments, and often partial in our affections; and Jesus will teach us that his saints are *one*—that we should love them all and be submissive and brotherly in all our relations with them. A pastor, for example, is not to take up with the literary families of his neighborhood, where he may join in the gambols of intellect; nor with the rich and luxurious, where he may expatiate in the elegance of splendid mansions and stately hospitality; nor with the venerable and far-advanced Christians whose hearts and hopes are in heaven. No; not with any one class, but with all classes, should he come in contact, and show the same submissive, loving, deferential spirit to them

all. We fail in few things more lamentably than in esteeming one another very highly in love for the Lord's sake; nor is there any nobler or more difficult exercise of that charity which hopeth all things, believeth all things and beareth all things than to submit ourselves one to another in the fear of God.

#### IV. HOUSEHOLD DUTIES (ch. v. 22—vi. 9).

Next to the Church, the *family* occupies place in the Bible. The family is the society of *nature*, out of which flow all other corporations, as townships, provinces, republics, monarchies, empires, etc.—all the natural arrangements and relations of the body politic throughout the world. The Church is the society of *grace*, founded, sustained and perfected in grace (which finally, indeed, brightens into glory), and out of it as a teeming fountain of blessedness flow all the charitable and benevolent institutions (heathenism had, and has, none of them) with which every Christian land is filled. The Church is the fountain opened in the rock from whence the healing waters flow over the world; this is the source of all our missionary undertakings which in the apostolic ages and in these last times have attracted the attention and excited the admiration of mankind. These are the two centres whence mighty influences go forth in all directions and shed their dewy blessings over the populations of the world, the two poles—nature and grace, the family and the Church, Creator and Redeemer—around which the mighty systems of providence and grace revolve, the former being the manifestation of creating power; the second, of redeeming love. The Head of the family is God the Father; the Head of the Church is God the Son, the



God-Man; and the Spirit that pervades and glorifies both is the Holy Ghost. Thus we have before us the two theatres of divine operation harmoniously united in the *Christian household*. Let us, therefore, enter with the apostle the sanctuary of the family—not turbulent and repulsive as in nature it often is, but peaceful and benignant as grace makes it—and expatiate over the moralities, sanctities and beauties which adorn it.

*First. Wives.* “*Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord*” (ver. 22). For the duty of wives generally, consult the following scriptures: Prov. xii. 4; xix. 14; xxxi. 10-31; Rom. vii. 2, 3; 1 Cor. vii. 3; Eph. v. 22; Col. iii. 18; 1 Tim. ii. 9-12; Tit. ii. 4, 5; Heb. xiii. 4; 1 Pet. iii. 1-6. Here, however, the apostle mentions only the one great necessary duty of submission. The wife is not the head of the household, and rule on her part would be a reversing of the order and ordinance of both Creator and Redeemer, and would be followed by fearful evils, as quaint old Francis Quarles sings not unskillfully:

“Ill thrives the hapless family that shows  
A cock that’s silent and a hen that crows;  
I know not which live most unnatural lives—  
Obeying husbands or commanding wives.”

If, as Pope asserts, the two dominant passions of the female sex be the love of pleasure and the love of power, wives should, however unwilling to bow to the authority of Scripture, at least yield to the recommendation of the poet,

“And never answer till their husbands cool,  
And if they rule them do not seem to rule.”

The word of God, however, does not deal in appear-

ances, but in realities; and if any wife refuses the submission proper to her head and guardian, she disobeys the command of God, and to him she must answer for it. Newton says in his pleasant way that he would allow the reins occasionally to lie in the wife's hand when the road is smooth and pleasant—with the proviso, however, that he may have the liberty of resuming them in rough roads and stormy weather. Such a mutual arrangement may be agreeable to both parties, and is, perhaps, permissible, though the analogy of the text, and especially of the words "as unto the Lord," is against it. This phrase, *as unto the Lord*, reveals the glory and the dignity of the Christian dispensation, in which the presence of the Lord is an all-pervading element, and in which all the littleness of our personal relationships is submerged in the recognition of fellowship with him. It is his service throughout. We recognize him in the magistrate who reigns; in the husband who rules his household well; in the loving, obedient wife—a type of the redeemed Church; and in the honest diligence of faithful servants. Every one acts in his sphere as unto the Lord, and the presence of our common Lord and Master sustains and blesses all. The reason of this submission is given in verses 23 and 24.

*Second. The example of Christ.* "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church, and he is the Saviour of the body" (ver. 23). Jesus Christ, having assumed our nature for the purpose of redemption and for the glory of God, has appropriated, consecrated and dignified all human relations. The husband, the wife, the servant condition, the offices of royalty and submission—all conceivable

relations among men—he has glorified by shedding over them the sacredness of a personal appropriation. He is himself the *Prince* and the *Subject*, the Sceptre-Bearer and the Burden-Bearer, the Lion of the tribe of Judah and the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. The husband manifests Christ's headship; the wife, lowly and loving and obedient, like the Church, shows forth the reception and fullness of Christ's love; and the servant in unrepining submission to the will of his master is but treading the path consecrated by Christ, who, being in the form of God and thinking it no robbery to be equal with God, yet took upon him the form of a servant and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (Phil. ii. 6-8). There seems to be no restriction but the will of God. While the rule of the husband is *in the Lord*, the wife is bound to obey; but the commands of a hard, cruel, tyrannical master who has no respect to the will of God she has no right to obey, and that simply for the reason that such obedience could never be given to the husband as unto God. The headship of Christ is holy, loving and just, and such should be the rule of the husband. Christ provides for the Church, leads her in the wilderness by his presence, defends her from her enemies, and finally makes her the sharer of his glory; and such should be the conduct of husbands to their wives if they expect from them the obedience which the Church renders to Christ.

*Third. The husband's love.* For the duty of husbands generally, consult the following passages: Gen. ii. 24; 1 Sam. i. 8; Matt. ii. 13-15; xix. 5, 6; 1 Cor. vii. 3-11; Eph. v. 28; Col. iii. 19; 1 Tim. v. 8; Heb. xiii. 4; 1 Pet. 3-7. Here, however, the great

duty commanded is LOVE, and the highest of all examples is brought forth to enforce it: "Love your wives, even as Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it." If, on the one hand, Paul requires obedience "in everything," on the other he requires a love which can be extinguished only in death. These are the two mother-virtues—love and obedience—from which all others flow. If the husband act out the love of Christ in his whole family life and the wife exhibit the obedience which the Church owes to Christ, then the family will be a happy family, and on this side of heaven you can find no other spot where so many virtues meet. The rule of love is not felt to be tyrannical, and obedience in the Lord is not felt to be degradation; and then there is so much that is common to both that the peculiarities of their distinctive positions make up but an inconsiderable portion of their household relations. They have one faith, one hope and one heavenly calling; their enemies are the same; they must gird themselves together for the same conflict in the struggle of life; and the clouds and the tempests of the evil day threaten both equally. Take such a faithful Christian family wherever you find it, from the palace to the cottage, and you will find in it the same noble principles, the same moral beauty and grandeur. It is a nursery for heaven and a type of the house not made with hands.

*Fourth. Christ's love to the Church.* This subject is introduced only in a casual way and as an example for husbands, but, being mentioned, the apostle, whose principle was to know nothing among men save Jesus Christ and him crucified, immediately launches forth upon the ocean of redeeming love:

*“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish”* (ver. 25-27).

Let us analyze for a moment this glorious description, that we may comprehend at our leisure, as far as may be, the nature of the eternal mercy.

(1) *He loved the Church.* His heart was moved with affection in the heavens, and he left the throne of his glory, the homage of the angels and the bosom of the Father that he might restore the wanderer to the heavenly fold. She is the chosen bride which he contemplated from eternity in the purpose of the Father, when, even before the creation of the world, his delights were with the sons of men. It is sweet to be the object of love; to know and feel that Jesus loved you from eternity, loves you now and will love you for ever; to be sure in the midst of forgetfulness and estrangement that *One* loves thee still and can never forget thee—that his eye and his heart are as tender and as merciful as on the day when he expired upon the accursed tree. This tranquillizes our fears and stills all the stormy emotions of our troubled minds. This is not the love he bears to the world, for he loves the world too; it is not mere compassion over misery, nor the tender feeling which seeks to relieve distress. No; the love he bears the Church is that, and far more than that. It is a love which delights in its object, which turns misery into joy and deformity into beauty, that it may have an object of complacency on which to

fasten its regards. His love to the Church is sympathy and delight. He has made her beautiful by his own comeliness, so that the all-seeing Eye can discover no imperfection. She is his bride, the second Eve for the second Adam, taken from his bleeding side and to be presented to him on the day of the espousals (Rev. xix. 7) as the worthy queen of the new world. She is bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, and his own royal resurrection righteousness is the garment which she wears. Oh, who can imagine the affection which the Son of God bears to his beloved Church, the object of his eternal solicitude and the vessel of mercy into which he has poured all the fullness of his grace? She followed him through the Valley of Humiliation, and she shall share with him the visions of his beatific glory. *With him* is the secret and charm of her love—*with him* through the barren wilderness or *with him* in the heavenly Canaan. To drink the bitter gall on Golgotha or to enter into the cloud of his glory on Tabor is all the same to her, for in both and in all cases she has the strong and victorious assurance that *he is with her*. No higher glory can she ever desire on earth or in heaven than to be with him and like him, for he is the one living centre in which all glories meet.

(2) *He gave himself for it.* This is atonement, redemption, sacrifice, ransom, and it is the constant doctrine of the New Testament. (See Rom. v. 6, 7, 8; xiv. 15; 2 Cor. v. 14, 15; 1 Thess. v. 10; John xviii. 14; Heb. ii. 9; Luke xxii. 19; Tit. ii. 14; 1 Tim. ii. 6; 1 Cor. v. 7; xi. 24; Gal. ii. 20; iii. 13; iv. 4; 1 Pet. ii. 21.) These passages with one voice declare that the death of Jesus Christ was to expiate the sins of men and to bring in reconciliation with God. Hold

fast, therefore, the doctrine of atonement, by which every believer has free access to the holiest of all. His death was our peace-offering with God. Had he not died, the law would have remained without vindication and the portals of glory would have remained closed. No mighty and compelling example of divine clemency would have been given to the universe, and the poor soul, forsaken and fatherless, would have no assurance of a welcome in the skies. The cross is the explanation of the dark ways of providence; we read at the same time the enormity of sin and the love that forgives it. All attempts to explain away the death of Christ into common martyrdom are profane and unphilosophical. His sufferings are twofold—*exemplary* and *atoning*. He is the Head of believers, to lead them on, and he is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. Paul speaks often of our suffering with Christ and bearing the cross of Christ; yet he exclaims in indignation, “Was Paul crucified for you?” (1 Cor. i. 13). He knew the difference between the example of Christ and his expiation, and we should be careful not to confound them.

(3) *The purpose of his love.* “That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish” (ver. 26, 27).

This purpose was twofold, according to our passage—viz., *sanctification* and *glorification*. His purpose in dying was “that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.” Jerome and others translate, “That he might sanctify it by the word, and cleanse it by the washing of water;” and the sense is

good, and the construction neither forced nor unnatural. This washing refers, without doubt, to baptism, though the phrase in our Greek text is nowhere else found in the Scriptures; but we have the washing or bath of regeneration (Tit. iii. 5); water is connected with regeneration in John iii. 5, and the washing of the body with pure water refers to the same thing (Heb. x. 22). So, also (Acts xxii.), baptism is connected with the washing away of sins and calling upon the name of the Lord. All these agree with our passage in making the bath of baptism the means of the Church's purification. There seems, however, to be a distinction taken between sanctifying the Church and purifying her, for the passage seems to imply this—that he might sanctify her *after* having purified her by the bath of water (baptism), according to the word of God. Baptism is the threshold of purification, over which she must first pass, and then the work of sanctification proceeds until she is assimilated unto the Lord. In the New Testament little more seems to be required for baptism than a simple confession that Jesus is the Son of God. This acknowledgment being made, the candidate enters into the Church through the bath of regeneration, and now the great work of sanctification proceeds under the hand of the Holy Spirit. Baptism, therefore, is the ordinance for regenerating the children of God, as the Lord's Supper is the ordinance for nourishing and building them up. It is not only a solemn admission of the baptized into the visible Church, but also a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, of his ingrafting into Christ, of regeneration, of remission of sins, of his going up unto God, through Jesus Christ, to walk in newness of life.



But what does the phrase here, *by the word*, or “according to the word,” mean? The old expositors of the Church understood it of the form of baptism. This, however, is weak and unsatisfactory, notwithstanding De Wette’s defence of it. The term *rema* (“word”) is “the gospel”—viz., the word of God or the word of life; so the word of faith (Rom. x. 8). (See also Rom. x. 17; Eph. vi. 17; 1 Pet. i. 25.) De Wette’s surmise that *the word* (*rema*) cannot signify the gospel is groundless; it differs, indeed, from *logos*, but such is not the difference. Both are applied to the word of God—that is, the gospel—but *logos* alone is applied to the person of the Son of God. The meaning, then, is this: “That he might sanctify her by the word of the gospel, after having purified her by the bath-water.”

Then the second object that he had in view was that he might present her to himself a glorious Church—not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that she should be without blemish. This offers no difficulty, and the critics have only made work for themselves. Surely, when the saints shall hear his voice and rise from their graves to meet him in the air, they shall be presented to him. He loved her and washed her from her sins in his blood, and he shall first draw her up to the presence of his glory in the clouds (1 Thess. iv. 17), after which he shall present her to the Father, and then come, invested with the authority and majesty of God, to reign for ever over the renewed earth with his bride. She is now in misery and conflict, struggling against the waves of sorrow which threaten every moment to submerge her; she shall then be *glorious* like her Master and Head in every faculty of the mind

and in every fibre of the body; with a beauty and a loveliness corresponding to the dignity in store for her; with a splendor and a majesty in keeping with the ransom that was paid for her; with a fullness of love and a nearness to God and a perpetually-increasing communion in the Spirit worthy of the eternal purpose of God in the creation and redemption of the world. No spot to remind you of the ancient storms—no wrinkle, through all the years of eternity, to testify of superannuation or decay! Holy and without blemish (these are sacrificial terms, but used here morally), she shall enjoy the vigor of eternal youth in that happy land where winter does not wither the flowers of paradise, and sin and Satan and death can sully and divide the children of God no more.

Oh how glorious this Church! How noble the hope of being there, of standing with acceptance before the presence of the Lord invested with the white robes of spotless purity! O my God, I long after thine image, that in all things I may act worthily of thy love to me. Oh for that burning love which can rest satisfied with nothing less than thee!

“Yes, we shall love. But who can know—  
 What tongue or pen can fully show—  
 The depths beneath and height of love?  
 Our souls from endless death to save,  
 Himself, his blood, his life, he gave.”

*Fifth. The natural oneness.* “So ought men to love their wives, as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself” (ver. 28). The apostle now returns to his theme—that is, the duty of husbands—and he does so after stating the example of Christ, who to seek and to save his bride came down from the upper sanctuary,

became one with her by assuming her nature (Heb. ii. 14); so that the redeemed Church and the Redeemer fulfilled and perfected the paradisiacal marriage union: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" (Gen. ii. 23; 1 Cor. xi. 8). Adam, without being deceived, followed (1 Tim. ii. 14) his wife into sorrows and dangers from which he was unable to deliver her. He could not break the yoke, but he could help to bear it, and in so doing he was a type of the Redeemer and Husband, who, seeing all our dangers and knowing well the depth of our fallen condition, voluntarily came into them, himself undefiled amidst all possible defilement; not only the Burden-Bearer of our woes, but the triumphant Redeemer of our forfeited glories.

His oneness with us is complete. He is our Brother-Man, our Kinsman-Redeemer, and his love to us was perfect. This is the force of the "*so* ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself." Jesus, clothing himself with our nature, bearing our burdens of sorrow and finally dying for his bride on the cross, is the right and proper example for husbands. The union is full and complete: husband and wife are sharers of one common nature; they are, or ought to be, animated by the same temporal and eternal hopes; they have entered into the same lifeboat to buffet together the billows of the troublous sea; they have put their hands to the plough, and should never look back to what they were before their marriage. Their union is the most perfect known upon earth, for they are no longer twain, but one flesh; and the more this is realized, the happier the married life must be. Let differences arise between them, so that the sentiment or feeling of oneness is broken, and the

glory of the marriage state is at once dimmed; it is no more that unity in variety which is the perfection of all God's works in so far as they illustrate his own nature. The faithful husband seeks not his own, but his wife's; his affections, which God has made to flow outward and upward, find their natural home in her; and he seeks and finds in her the solace for his earthly woes. She knows her weakness, and looks to him for provision and defence; while his affection finds in her not only the clinging dependant, but also the strong supporter by whom all his cares are divided and all his happiness far more than doubled. He loves her as he loves himself, and this love is returned manifold into his bosom; so that the typical nature of the marriage union is realized. On the one hand, there is power, authority, protection and love; on the other, meekness, gentleness, quiet obedience, winning affection; and these two, meeting and mingling in the family circle, mutually limit, counteract or sustain each other, as the case may be; so that impetuosity is tempered by prudence; weakness is sustained by the feeling of another's strength; angularities are rubbed off by contact; patience has her perfect work; anger and wrath are moderated by gentle forbearance and kind words; while the spirit of love—the great anti-friction in human affairs—interpenetrating the whole domestic economy, gilds the family life with the sacredness and the radiance of heaven. It is indeed the best and noblest type of Christ and the Church.

*Sixth. The principle of self-love.* “No man ever yet hated his own flesh” (ver. 29). The apostle might have said “body,” and the meaning would have been the same. *Flesh* is not here used in the bad sense

which it often has in the New Testament (Rom. viii. 4, 5, 6-13; Gal. v. 16, 24; vi. 8). Here *sarx* ("flesh") is used for *phusis* ("nature"—viz., the nature of man, or human nature). The principle is not condemned in the New Testament. Selfishness is strongly reprobated, but self-love is sometimes encouraged and often taken for granted as right and proper. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor *as thyself*" is the solemn command of God; so that self-love is the measure of all other love. The power of this principle may be seen especially in times of great calamity and common danger, such as earthquakes and shipwrecks, when each individual, generally speaking, seeks to take care only of himself. The examples of self-sacrificing love are not more than enough to confirm the rule that self-love regulates, and should regulate, the conduct of mankind. This principle the apostle uses as an argument why husbands should love their wives, inasmuch as the mutual love is self-love, seeing they twain are one flesh; for no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth it and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church.

*Seventh. Members of his body.* "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones" (ver. 30). The Holy Scripture speaks much about our incorporation into the body of Christ (Rom. xii. 5; 1 Cor. vi. 15; xii. 27). There is the old Adam, to whom we stand related by nature and from whom have descended the burdens of iniquity which oppress us, from which it is the effort of the second Adam to deliver us; and this can be accomplished only by union with Christ. No strength but his can enable us to stem the ocean-swell that rises up against us in the struggle for holi-

ness and life; the branch shed off from the vine becomes a sport of the winds; the stone that is loosed from the temple has lost all its strength and importance; a member cut off from the body is deprived of the living circulation and dies or withers away. It is even so with believers, says the apostle. United with our Lord, we are strong and holy and victorious; we can go anywhere, do anything and conquer anything. We are identified with him by faith and love, and are permitted and encouraged to appropriate all the promises of his grace. This is our strength and our glory: nor is there any stimulus to faith and good works so effectual as the realized consciousness of union with Christ. This oneness is begun by faith, continued in love and perfected in the glories of the skies.

Members of his body! This is a great thought and worthy of its divine Author; for it announces the reality of the Church's unity and annihilates the natural sectarianism of our carnal minds. The body of Christ is not half a dozen of the least informed and most immoral nations of Europe, headed by a tyrannical priest on the Tiber whose own states are the most degraded and the worst governed in the world. No! The body of Christ is not seated on the seven hills, nor clothed with purple and scarlet and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, though Babylon, the mother of harlots, may be (Rev. xvii. 4); and the impudence must be nearly diabolical which can assert it. The body of Christ is holy, and its members are the saints, the holy ones, wherever they are found. The renewed, the converted, the faithful, who receive the testimony of God; the poor in spirit, to whom belongs the kingdom; the pure in heart, who shall see

God; the persecuted for righteousness' sake, of whom the world is not worthy,—these are the body of Christ, the glorious corporation which the Holy Ghost is forming, and which shall survive all earthly things and flourish immortally in the kingdom of God.

*Eighth. Marriage.* “*For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh*” (ver. 31). The apostle, having referred to Gen. ii. 22 as containing a typical reference to the union between Christ and the Church, now turns again to the natural physical relation, which he confirms from Gen. ii. 24: “For this cause”—viz., the closeness of the union—“shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined to his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.” Meyer refers the phrase *for this cause* (ver. 31) exclusively to ver. 30, and, following Bengel, Grotius and others, asserts that the man leaving father and mother must be Christ. It is true that Jesus left his Father and came down to redeem the bride, but this truth is not taught in the text; it is also true, as Meyer asserts, that he *shall* leave his Father's throne, where he now is, and come in the glory of his royal state to claim his Bride, but this is not taught in our text. The thirty-first verse is a description of the marriage relation, and does not refer to Christ and the Church in any one respect.

The words *they two* form a strong argument against polygamy. The Scripture in a thousand ways recognizes the propriety of monogamy, though polygamy is nowhere expressly forbidden. (1) God created one man and one woman in the beginning, which shows clearly the intention of the Creator that a man should have only one wife. (2) It is a remarkable fact that

the sexes are nearly equal. I was told by a pastor in a very large congregation that after twenty years' labor the number of males and females baptized was absolutely the same. All our population tables bring out nearly the same result, which shows how unnatural polygamy is, and how impossible to generalize it. Indeed, even in Mohammedan countries comparatively few men have more than one wife. (3) There are traces of the natural and scriptural doctrine of marriage in the histories and traditions of all nations, savage as well as civilized. (4) Polygamy is the source of boundless evils—bitterness, feuds, destruction, divided affections (if, indeed, pure affection can exist in it), mutual hatred and jealousy; and, instead of increasing, it infallibly diminishes, the population, as we see in the empire of the Osmanlies, of which it has been truly said "that Turkey is perishing for want of Turks."

Marriage and the Sabbath—an ordinance of nature and an ordinance of grace—are the only two institutions which have descended to us from paradise; and when complied with in the spirit of their divine Author, they are the source of innumerable blessings to mankind. Olshausen's opinion that the enjoyments of marriage typified the union of the Head with the members in the Lord's Supper, when they become one with him by eating his flesh and drinking his blood, is absurd, carnal and contrary to the text.

The apostle now leaves the type and resumes the consideration of the thing typified.

*Ninth. The great mystery.* "This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church" (ver. 32). The great mystery is not that Christ loved the



Church and gave himself for it, for this was known long before ; and what is known ceases to be a mystery. Mystery is not a thing that cannot be understood, but something that has not hitherto been revealed ; the word is applied to the facts, types and ordinances of Judaism which adumbrated the doctrines of the cross. Hence the office of Christ was to make known the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven (Matt. xiii. 11). Hence the secret working of the Babylonian Antichrist, in which the liar assumes the garb of an angel of light, is called the mystery of iniquity (lawlessness, having no law, being above law, like God) (2 Thess. ii. 7), and the coming of Christ in the flesh is called the mystery of godliness (1 Tim. iii. 16). (See the use of the word "mystery" in the following passages: Eph. iii. 4; vi. 19; Col. iv. 3; 1 Tim. iii. 9; Rom. xi. 25; xvi. 25; 1 Cor. ii. 7; iv. 1; xiii. 2.)

Here, in our passage, the fine comparison between the husband and the wife and Christ and the Church is called a great mystery, not because it is not knowable, but because it was not hitherto fully revealed, nor is it now, nor shall it be until the coming of the Lord shall make manifest all strength and wisdom of the tie which unites the members with the Head. I do not say that a mystery is something which we fully understand even when it is revealed, but that it is something which may be understood, and which we are not forbidden to search after. The union of Christ and his Church is a glorious mystery, hinted at in the Old Testament, realized fully in the incarnation and work of the Redeemer, and yet to be fully manifested when we shall see him as he is and know even as we are known. Adam and Eve in the happy garden were types of it ; the Jewish

nation, separated from the rest of the world and dedicated to the service of God, symbolized it (Isa. liv. 5; Ps. xlv.; Ezek. xvi.; Hos. ii. 16); and the faithful husband, loving, protecting and in all things identified with his wife, is the perpetual, external and universal memorial of it.\* Marriage is the mystery of natural life springing forth in all directions as from a fountain until it fill the world with men; the union of the Church with her Head in heaven is the mystery of spiritual life, which, breaking forth in the wilderness like the streams from the rock, shall go on increasing and multiplying till the world be filled with Christians. Our union with Adam is the moral bond which unites the whole family of earth, and our union with Christ, the second Adam, is the spiritual bond which unites all the family of heaven. These are the two fountains, the two Adams, the two poles of the natural and the spiritual, the two kingdoms which have existed from the beginning, and under the forms of hell and heaven shall exist for ever.

*Tenth.* The thirty-third verse contains nothing new save the phrase "*and the wife see that she reverence her husband.*" Here *wife* (*gune*) is the nominative absolute, and can be understood only by reference to some verb understood. (For the use of the particle "that" (*hina*), see Winer, sect. 44, 4.) But the sentiment here is important: If the husband is bound to love and protect, she is equally bound to obey and reverence. He is the type of power, wisdom and divine love; she, of obedience, attachment and reverence. The faithful

\* Jerome translates *mystery* in this passage by the word *sacramentum*, and on this false translation the whole popish doctrine of marriage as a sacrament is built.

wife following her husband in the trials and dangers of life is the type of the Church leaning on the arm of her Redeemer and braving with him all the dangers of Egypt, the wilderness and the Jordan of death. Thus all the relations of human life are consecrated and blessed with a heavenly unction; so that in the midst of earthly duties and obligations there is always a breath and a savor of heaven. The family circle is filled with the choicest fruits, and is compared to a garden which the Lord has blessed. Jesus rules in each member and love becomes the guiding, central principle of all their actions.

This, however, leads the apostle to another family relationship, to which we must now turn your attention.

*Eleventh. Obedience.* “*Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right*” (chap. vi. 1).

The Greek word for “children” (*tekna*) means, in this passage, “natural children,” as in the following and many similar scriptures: Matt. x. 21; Acts vii. 5; both sons and daughters, like the Hebrew (Gen. iii. 16; xxx. 1; xxxiii. 6). It means descendants or posterity (Matt. iii. 9; Luke i. 17; iii. 8; Acts ii. 39; 1 Pet. iii. 6, “daughters”).

It is used figuratively in the following significations: (1) To denote descendants (Matt. ix. 2; Mark ii. 5; 1 Tim. i. 18; 2 Tim. ii. 1). The usage (Mark x. 23) is the same as the Hebrew (1 Sam. iii. 9-16). (2) Disciples or scholars (2 Tim. ii. 1; Philem. 10; 1 Cor. iv. 17: here it is “in the Lord;” 1 Tim. i. 2, “in the faith”).

Take these significations together, and you have the explanation of the following phrases: “the children of

God" (John i. 12; Rom. viii. 16-21; ix. 8; 1 John iii. 1); "children of the devil" (1 John iii. 10; so the Hebrew and the Septuagint, 2 Kings xvii. 7); "the children of Jerusalem" (Luke xix. 44; Gal. iv. 25; Rev. ii. 23); "the children of wisdom" (Matt. xi. 19; Luke vii. 35); "children of light" (Eph. v. 8); "children of obedience" (1 Pet. i. 14); "children of wrath" (Eph. ii. 3); "children of apostasy," "children of unrighteousness." (See Deut. xxv. 2; 1 Kings ii. 26; 2 Kings xiv. 14.) Many similar phrases are found both in Scripture and in the classics, but they are without any difficulty and need not be repeated.

But, leaving the form of expression, we observe that *obedience is a natural duty* confirmed and sanctioned in every way by the word of God. We owe to our parents life, being, health, food, raiment—in fact, all earthly blessings; and love, veneration, obedience, seem to be only a natural return on our part. This is one of the very instincts of nature and is coextensive with the species, varying among the different nations and religions in strength and intensiveness, but existing everywhere—the very root and basis of all other duties and obligations. The reason or ground given is *that it is right*, which Theodoret expounds by the words "according to the law of God."

The only limitation given is in the words *in the Lord*, which are not to be joined with *parents*, as if the obedience were required only to spiritual parents, but with the verb *obey*, and should be rendered thus: Children, obey, in the Lord, your parents—that is, obey your natural parents in so far as their commands are according to the will of the Lord. His will is the limitation; all commands find their boundary-line at this point—

namely, the will of God, or, which is the same thing, the fundamental principles of our moral nature (Acts v. 28, 29; iv. 19).

This glorious principle of obedience is the law of the happy universe, and the moment it is violated death, confusion and chaos flow in upon us, as if the fountains of the great deep were broken open. God, the living God, King and Creator, sits at the centre of this great universe, upon which he has impressed the law of obedience as the condition of its blessedness, and while this law is obeyed it is holy and happy and blessed. Through the wide circles of the heavens the royal law of loving obedience sheds its benedictions; and the hearts, families, churches and kingdoms on the earth where its authority is most fully realized are the best types and examples of the heavenly state. It is the constant aim of the divine mercy to restore in our rebellious province the supremacy of this celestial law, and hence the new and nobler motives for keeping it which have been furnished by the gospel. It is no longer a Creator invested with the attributes of vengeance and terror who speaks to us of a broken law out of the midst of the fire, but a Redeemer, our Kinsman and Brother, who tells us of his dying love, of the law vindicated and made honorable, and of the coming of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, to write the new law of loving obedience upon our hearts. Let this obedience in the Lord become the law of our families, and from that moment a new life and a new spirit will flow into them: the parents will rule in the Lord, and the children will obey in the Lord; the masters will no more exact, and the servants will no longer seek to deceive; the magistrate will judge in the fear

of the Lord, and the subjects will obey him joyfully, not only for wrath, but for conscience' sake. The eye cannot behold, the very heart cannot imagine, a lovelier spectacle in this sin-stricken world of ours than a quiet, obedient family where everything is done in the Lord and as unto the Lord. In such a family the principle of obedience is love. It is no mere external obedience, such as we sometimes see in soldiers and servants, where there is nothing of respect or of veneration. Hence the apostle adds—

*Twelfth.* “Honor thy father and mother ; which is the first commandment with promise” (ver. 2). The second commandment has a promise of mercy to those in general who keep the commandments of God ; the fifth is the first to which a special promise is annexed. Jerome and others thought there was something like a contradiction here. Jerome says : “*Quod est mandatum primum in promissione, quasi quatuor alia mandata, que ante dicta sunt non habeant promissiones, et in hoc solo pollicitatio feratur adjuncta*”—that is, “As if the four preceding commandments have no promises, while this alone has.” It is, however, an undeniable fact that the fifth is the first commandment with a special promise attached, and surely that should silence the cavils of these objectors and faultfinders.

But what is the promise, and how can it influence us ?

The promise is twofold—*prosperity* and *long life*, the two great blessings promised to Israel of old. Judaism was the childhood of the Church (Gal. iv. 1–4), and the law perfected the bringing in of a better hope and a firmer covenant whose promises reach onward and upward to the eternal world. Canaan, the wilderness and Egypt were indeed literal and positive

realities for the typical nation whose ordinances and ceremonies, stately and full of significance, carried the eye of hope forward to the antitypes—to the evil of sin and the coming of the Deliverer to destroy it; to the conflict with spiritual enemies, the triumph of the believer over them, the pilgrimage to a better world and the eternal reward when the victory is won. But Canaan, the wilderness and Egypt, the temporal promises of the Jews and their worldly sanctuary, have for us a still higher significance, as they are the drapery in which so many spiritual realities are shrouded, the enamel in which the pearls of great price are fast, the veils and vestments of blue and purple and fine linen which surrounded the all-glorious person of the Redeemer. We see it all, and understand it all. Paul, in the Hebrews, has let us into the secret of the Mosaic ceremonial, and we are able to enter into and enjoy all the Jewish promises with a nobler ardor than even the Jews themselves. Besides, the New Testament as well as the Old Testament sustains us with temporal promises; it supports and comforts us, indeed, mainly by the assurance of future glory at the coming of the Lord; but the hope of temporal blessings is by no means excluded (Matt. vi. 33; 1 Tim. iv. 8; Luke xii. 31; 1 Pet. iii. 10-12). Godliness has the promise both of the life that now is and of that which is to come. The faithful child may take refuge in the promise of his father that his bread shall be given and his water made sure; he will honor his father and mother, that it may be well with him and that he may live long on the earth. He would, indeed, sometimes "desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better" (Phil. i. 23); but he knows and feels that the longer his days

are prolonged, the more opportunities will he have to bear witness to the name of his absent Lord. This is the place of danger and of honor—the battle-field on which the soldiers of the cross must take their stand; and he would willingly spend all his strength and courage in such a glorious warfare.

“Vita nostra plena bellis  
Inter hostes inter arma,  
More belli vivitur;  
Nullæ lucis absque pugna,  
Nullæ noctes absque luctu  
Terræ dantur filiis.” \*

Or take the same in a fine German translation, which, though free, is very beautiful :

“Unser Leben ist ein kriegem,  
Feinde rings, Geschosse fliegen  
Wie im Kriege stets umher,  
Kämpfen musst du alle Tage  
Keine Nacht ist ohne Plage  
Für uns Erdensöhne mehr.”

The promise may indeed have a wider application in reference to both the Jewish and the Christian economies, thus : Let children obey and honor their parents, for this is indispensably necessary to your moral and political well-being. When such honor and obedience are wanting, the bands of society are breaking up and the elements of national prosperity ready to be dissolved. I do not say this was in the mind of the Jewish legis-

\* “Our life is full of wars  
Among enemies and arms;  
We live as soldiers do:  
No days without fighting,  
No nights without sorrow,  
Are given to the children of earth.”



lator, but it follows as a necessary corollary from the exact meaning of the text. The long life and prosperity of the individuals necessarily lead to the perpetuity and prosperity of the state. The whole body politic is but the union of the individuals that compose it, the nation is but an enlarged individual, and the whole human family is nothing but Adam dilated; so that the promises and the blessings attached to individual families in obeying and honoring their parents may without straining be extended to all proper honor and obedience both in the Church and in the State.

*Thirteenth.* “*And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*” (ver. 4).

The *fathers* is without doubt to be taken in the natural sense (Mark v. 40; Luke ii. 48; Heb. xi. 23. here “*fathers*” means *parents*). “*Father*,” in Greek, is often only a name of honor and respect (1 Cor. iv. 15; Phil. ii. 22; 1 Thess. ii. 11); it signifies (like the Hebrew *ab*) the source, origin or author of anything, and is applied in many ways in the Holy Scripture; as, the father of circumcision (Rom. iv. 12); the father of lies (John viii. 44). God is the Father of the human race, of the Jewish nation (John viii. 41), of the Christian Church (John i. 12; Rom. viii. 16). and in an altogether peculiar sense he is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. (See Matt. xi. 27; xxviii. 19; Luke ix. 26; x. 22; John i. 14, 18; iii. 35.)

The duty of fathers is both negative and positive. In Colossians (iii. 21) the apostle adds the reason why we should not provoke our children to wrath—viz., lest they be discouraged. You may excite and enrage your children in many ways, such as by hastiness of

temper, by punishing instead of correcting them, by severity instead of the spirit of kindness and love, by threatenings which you do not intend to execute, and by promises which you can never perform. Rash actions and untempered words may provoke them to anger and discourage them exceedingly. Everything partial, cruel and unjust should be avoided if you wish your children to honor and obey you.

Then the positive duty is to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord—that is, in the *education* and *discipline* which God requires. “Education” (*paideia*) here includes all the family and relative duties, such as love, respect and obedience; all the doctrines, duties and moralities of the Christian religion; all the honest or honorable trades and professions by which children can be made to provide for themselves. In one word, you should give your children, in the highest and best sense of the word, a *good education*. Then this should be accompanied all through with the *nouthesia*, or proper discipline, mental and moral, which will enable the children to turn this education to good account. This right disposing of the *nous*, this infusing into the *mind* the principles of restraint, moral control and self-government, is more important than the amount of instruction communicated. A well-regulated mind is as noble a sight as a well-informed one, and the perfection of the family training consists in the union of both. There should be the stores of knowledge from which to draw and the well-regulated mind to use them properly, and both these great practical principles or duties should be enforced as coming from and leading to the Lord; for such is the double meaning of the genitive in this

passage. If we must choose between the subjective and the objective, we at once prefer the former; it is an education and a discipline which proceed from the Lord and must be based upon gospel teachings. His will is the ruling principle in the whole process; and if this be neglected, no blessing from the Lord can be expected to follow your efforts.

*Fourteenth. Slaves, servants.* “*Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ*” (ver. 5). Slavery is one of the most ancient, extensive and demoralizing institutions of the old world, and the apostle cannot pass it in silence. It is fundamentally anti-Christian, and the apostle never could have founded, or recommended the founding of, such an institution. On the contrary, he advises the practical abolition of it where it may be done without violence (1 Cor. vii. 21), and introduces the principle of a higher liberty, which altogether equalizes the master and the slave in the eye of the heavenly Law-giver. Look at Christianity from whatever point of view you please, and you will find it opposed to the slavery of the ancient world, and to all slavery of mind and body everywhere. Compared with the systems, principles and religions of old heathen times, Christianity is essentially democratic and leveling. It teaches the unity of the human race, and that the same blood flows through us all; it teaches the fallenness of our whole nature, and, consequently, the sinful equality of masters and their slaves in the sight of God; it teaches that the same divine ransom—even the precious blood of Christ—was freely and equally shed for us all. The master and his slaves must

stand at the same laver of baptismal purification, must sit down side by side at the same table of the Lord, and, being washed and sanctified and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God, must share together the same Father's house in the kingdom above. All these doctrines and principles are directly opposed to slavery, and when freely admitted into the community must eventually lead to the abolition of it.

The principle of the new life, however, does not act convulsively, but, like the law of Nature in the vegetable kingdom, gradually sheds forth its all-pervading vigor until the whole community flourishes and blooms with the health and freshness of a moral renovation. Our religion is the gospel of peace. Jesus Christ did not shed his blood to set the slave against his master or the subjects against their governors, though slavery and tyranny were both crying evils deserving the reprobation of both earth and heaven. No; the slave is to obey quietly, as before the Lord, and the master is to treat him kindly, knowing that he too has a Master in heaven (Col. iii. 22; 1 Tim. vi. 1; Tit. ii. 9; 1 Pet. ii. 18; Philem. 15, 16). From these passages it is manifest that the mere fact of being in slavery does not justify the slaves in abandoning their masters. If there be cruelty and tyranny on the part of the master, so that the position of the slave—evil in its own nature—becomes intolerable, then we must judge of his violence and insubordination as we judge of the risings and rebellions of oppressed subjects against their tyrannical rulers. The apostle does not, either here or elsewhere, give one precept or command which can fairly lead to the conclusion that slavery is scriptural or that the slave-owner has a right to appeal to

revelation for his justification. He says nothing of the slave-traffic, nor does he justify the principle that man should have property in his fellow-man, though he very clearly teaches that Christianity is not the religion of a sect, but of human nature, and that the slave and the slaveholder have equal need of its provisions. The gospel is not the standard of revolt around which the idle, the ignorant and the disaffected should rally, but a banner of peace to heal all the wounds and distractions of our world. Hence the apostle says, "Servants" (slaves), "be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as unto Christ." Obedience is the law of the gospel as well as the law of the unfallen universe, nor can the enormous evils of the ancient slave-system relieve the slave from the duty of it.

The words "according to the flesh," however, suggest that they have another Master, even a heavenly, to whom the slave and the slaveholder stand in the same relation of sin and apostasy. Be of good courage; the eye of Jesus is upon you. He was the Lord and became the servant (*doulos*) of all; his tender heart feels for your afflictions, and in due time he will deliver you as he did the Israelites in the days of old. Your position is indeed severe and oppressive, but grace can mitigate its bitterness; and the Lord and Giver of all grace has shared it with you, has entered into all its darkness and weariness (Phil. ii. 7), and he waited patiently for deliverance till the time appointed of the Father. Obey, therefore, as he obeyed, for he has given you an example that you should follow his steps. This will be useful also to your masters, and

will dispose them to mildness and gentleness when they see that you seek to obey them in honesty and singleness of heart.

The three words *as to Christ* show the lovely principle of the gospel—a principle found nowhere else on the earth. All relations of life, however bitter, are consecrated and sweetened by divine love; the Christian serves Christ in everything, and his entire service, whoever may be his immediate master, is done *as unto Christ*.

This is brought out more fully in the sixth verse: "*Not with eye-service as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.*" *Eye-service* is a word formed by the apostle for the occasion, and is found only here and in Colossians (iii. 22); it naturally signifies the service done under the eye of the master, and includes the disposition to neglect it when the master is absent. *From the heart* is, in the Greek, "from the soul," and is quite a peculiar expression. The apostle here and elsewhere shows that he felt himself perfectly free in the use of his words and phrases. The obedience here recommended is not the submission of hypocrisy and deceit, but the willing obedience of the heart and mind as unto the Lord. All is honest and open-hearted; everything breathes the spirit of a heavenly presence, knowing that whatever good thing any man doeth the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free; there is one common Master, one great Rewarder in the heavens, before whom they must all take the position of needy suppliants, and whose gifts of pardon and of life are freely distributed to all believers, whether they be bond or free.

*Fiftieth. The masters.* “*And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him*” (ver. 9). *Kurios* (“Lord,” “master,” “possessor”) is used in the New Testament for “Jehovah” (Matt. i. 22; v. 33; xxvii. 10; Acts vii. 49); it is used for Baal or simple “master,” as the master of a house (Mark xiii. 35); of servants, slaves, etc. (Matt. x. 24; xxiv. 45; Acts xvi. 16); of a vineyard (Matt. xx. 8; xxi. 40); it is applied to the king or emperor (Acts xxv. 26) and to the heathen gods (1 Cor. viii. 5). It is one of the highest titles given to the supreme God, and, as we have seen, it is the Greek word for the unutterable name “Jehovah.” It is applied to Jesus Christ in the following as well as in many other passages: Rom. x. 12; Heb. ii. 8; viii. 1. Thus the term *Kurios*, or “Lord,” has a very wide signification, but in all possible applications it includes the ideas of possession, power and authority. In our text it designates the slave-owners, to whom the apostle now turns in the course of his warnings and exhortations.

This apostolic warning to masters is threefold.

(1) *To do the same things to them*—that is, the will of God. The obedience and the faithful service of the slaves are to be met by corresponding qualities in the masters. You are not to treat them as your property, for they belong to Christ: ye are not to say, “They belong to me; their feelings are of no importance to me; I wish only their labors, nor am I under any obligations to them in the way of reciprocal kindness and affection.” No, says the apostle; ye are to do the same things to them; there is to be one law to both parties, one

Judge and Creator to whom they must all give an account.

(2) *Forbearing threatening*, which some render "remitting the threatened punishment." The Greek article here is emphatic. It is not any or every kind of threatening, or threatening in general, but *the threatening*—that is, the haughty, cruel, tyrannical, threatening—manners of most slaveholders. "*Quem admodum vulgus dominorum solet*" ("As the common herd of masters are accustomed to"), says Erasmus. This you are to give up. Your servants are human, and you are to treat them humanely; all overbearing and tyrannical conduct must be abandoned, and your awful position as slaveholders must not be made the means of degrading and brutalizing your dependants.

(3) "Ye too have a Master in heaven to whom you are responsible, and with whom there is no respect of persons." This view of the character of God must have been perfectly new to the heathen slaveholders, and tended, no doubt, not only to mitigate the bitterness of slavery, but finally to break the yoke altogether.

This finishes the apostle's exhortations to the members of the Christian household, and truly he has taught us much which it is all-important that we should know and observe. There is more of truth and beauty and holiness in these few verses from Ephesians (chap. v. 22 to vi. 10) than in all that remains of the heathen writers of antiquity put together. Here our thoughts are elevated to the great idea of a family in which the love of God reigns; where the various members, in their service to one another and to all men, are filled with



one common spirit of charity and forbearance; where authority is tempered by mildness and obedience and dignified by voluntary submission to the will and example of Christ. It is a sweet circle where all the inner wheels, great and small, move harmoniously, being tempered by grace; a fruitful field where the breath of heaven is pleasant and all the fruits of righteousness grow apace; a home of peace where men find their happiest hours on earth and saints the sweetest foretastes of heaven.

“Selig durch die Liebe,  
Götter-durch die Liebe  
Menschen Göttern gleich!  
Liebe macht den Himmel  
Himmlischer—die Erde  
Zu dem Himmelreich.”\*

\* Schiller.

## CHAPTER XI.

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; and for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak. But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things: whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts. Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.—EPHESIANS vi. 10-24.

THE apostle, having finished his warnings and exhortations to the various classes in the church—such as children and parents, servants and masters—turns now once more to the whole body of believers in order to prepare them for the spiritual warfare which by grace they are enabled to wage against the enemies of their

souls. From verse 10 to near the end of the chapter we have one of the noblest delineations anywhere to be found of the controversy between the soul of man enlightened and strengthened by the grace and power of God and the kingdom of darkness which seeks to hold her in thrall.

### I. FIRST PRINCIPLES.

If we analyze this noble allegory, we find the following principles taken for granted as the necessary basis on which it rests ;

(1) That the soul, though fallen, is conscious of her former glory, and by darkly groping and longing seeks to regain her native innocency. We may say with Augustine,

"Ad perennis vitæ fontem  
Mens sitivit arida ;  
Claustra carnis præsto frangi,  
Clausula quærit anima ;  
Gliscit, ambit eluctatur  
Exul frui patria."\*

(2) That the soul is of great, peerless value, seeing there is such a panoply provided to defend her. Such a ransom has been given for her ; such a glorious reward is awaiting her victory.

(3) That the chief enemy of man is the devil and his dark kingdom, against which we are called to wrestle. Flesh and blood are not our only nor our

\* " For the living fount of glory  
Longs my panting, thirsting soul,  
Longs to break its earthly prison,  
Longs to reach its heavenly goal,  
To regain its lost dominion,  
Far beyond this world's control."

greatest enemies; the devil is going about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

(4) The harmony between the soul of man and the will of God in this warfare. The two extremes must meet, the sovereignty of God and the free agency of man must be reconciled; it is a wrestle in which the human will must engage with all its powers, and yet the outfit and the panoply, the strength and the victory, all must be from above.

“*Ecce cœli lapsus arcu  
Atque spissa nube tectus,  
Rector ipse siderum  
Contra salvos mentis hostes,  
Præliantem me tuetur  
Bella pro me suscipit.*”

“*Der da shaut von Himmels Bogen,  
Von der Wolke dicht umzogen:  
Der da lenkt der Sterne Schaar,  
Der wird mir zur Seite kaempfen,  
Feindesgrimmi mir helfen dämpfen,  
Für mich streiten immerdar.*”\*

This is indeed the main source of our strength, and in proportion as we use it are we bold and successful warriors in the battles of the faith. He is with us and in us, and the sure word of his promise shall never fail. These thoughts fill the victorious soul of the apostle as with words of fire and promises of glory he seeks to enlist us under the banner of the cross. Thus in his final exhortation he says, *τὸ λοιπὸν* (“for the rest,” “as to what remains,” “finally”), not *τῶν*

\* “*Lo! from the arch of heaven descending,  
And in a thick cloud arrayed,  
He, the Ruler of the starry world,  
Beholds me fighting against my cruel enemies,  
And his strong hand gives me the victory.*”

λοιπον\* (“from henceforth,” “for the rest of your time”), which would be weak here, while in Gal. vi. 17 it is the appropriate form of expression. (See Phil. iii. 1; iv. 8; 2 Cor. xiii. 11; 1 Thess. iv. 1; 2 Thess. iii. 1.) Το λοιπον rarely refers to time, and when it does it is in such circumstances that the meaning cannot be mistaken (Heb. xii. 13), and almost all the passages can be explained without any reference to time. (Comp. 1 Cor. vii. 29; Matt. xxvi. 45; Mark xiv. 41. Here it may mean “sleep out the rest of your sleep,” etc.) For the further use of the phrase, see 1 Cor. iv. 2; i. 16; 2 Cor. xiii. 11; 1 Thess. iv. 1; 2 Tim. iv. 8; Acts xxvii. 29.

## II. MY BRETHREN.

The apostle begins with the words “*My brethren*” † (ver. 10). Nothing can be more natural than that the apostle in his last exhortation to that church should address them as his brethren in Christ and soldiers under the same banner of the cross. He gives them, as brethren (ver. 23), the salutation of peace, and the spirit of brotherly love breathes through the whole Epistle. Let us now, therefore, consider the meaning of the word.

And first, no doubt, it signifies the children of the same father and mother (Matt. i. 2; Luke iii. 1, 19), or of the same father only, or of the same mother only (Luke vi. 14; comp. with Matt. i. 2). Metaphorically, *brother* is applied in many ways: men of the same race, blood-relations, are brethren (Matt. xii. 46; John vii. 3; Acts i. 14; Gal. i. 19): so the Septuagint for the He-

\* Lachmann and Rückhert.

† Which are omitted by Lachmann and Tischendorf, but without sufficient documentary authority; nor is Olshausen's suspicion worthy of much regard.

brew *ach* (Gen. xiii. 8; xiv. 16); men of the same country are brethren (Matt. v. 47; Acts iii. 22; Heb. vii. 5); one of equal rank and dignity is a brother (Matt. xxiii. 8): so Septuagint and Hebrew (Prov. xviii. 9); disciples, followers, are brethren (Matt. xxv. 40; Heb. ii. 11, 12); persons having the same office, colleagues, are in Scripture called brethren (1 Cor. i. 1), joined with fellow-slave or fellow-servant (Rev. vi. 11; comp. Rev. xix. 10; xxii. 9): so the Septuagint and the Hebrew; men of the same faith are brethren, fellow-Christians (Acts ix. 30; xi. 29; 1 Cor. v. 11; Amos i. 9). Ye are my brethren, says the apostle; we are all of the same royal family, the same holy generation, descended from the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, as the earthly family is from the earthly Adam; we are fellow-countrymen, citizens of no mean city—that is, the heavenly Jerusalem, which is the mother of us all. We are all of the same rank in the sight of God—viz., miserable sinners redeemed by the blood of Christ, heirs of the same promises and clothed with the same office of royal priesthood. We are all disciples of one common Master, and all animated by the one faith of the Son of God, who loved us and gave himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice well-pleasing to God. We are brethren in every sense of the word; our enemies, our trials, our hopes and our fears, our struggles and our temptations, are all the same. Therefore I exhort you to consider—

### III. THE SOURCE OF YOUR STRENGTH.

*Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might* (ver. 10). Here, indeed, is the source of our strength,

the fountain-head from which flow all the streams of grace to water the weary heritage of God. We are strong in his strength. The joy of the Lord is our strength, and in the consciousness that he rejoices over us there is no sacrifice too dear for us to make, none of his and our enemies over whom we cannot triumph. When Jesus Christ is before our mind's eye, when his name, memory and dying love are in our hearts, then, indeed, sin loses its attractions, the world its power over us, and the tempter finds no entrance into our souls. Here the weakest saint has a treasure of strength against the day of temptation. Daniel was safe in the lions' den; Joseph was raised from the pit and the prison to the right hand of Pharaoh himself; the three faithful children were delivered from the furnace; Peter when sinking found the hand of Jesus ready to save; John in his lonely isle was comforted and sustained by apocalyptic visions which showed him the final triumph of Jesus and his saints; the denier of his Lord could not meet that tender Master's eye without bitter tears of penitence; and Stephen in the midst of his murderers found succor in his ascended Lord, and died, as his Master did, breathing forth only forgiveness and love. Oh, brother, here is a fountain of joy, a rock of strength, for pilgrims like you and me! It is (*en Kurio*) in thy dear Lord Jesus, to whom all power in heaven and earth is given; in whom love and strength, weakness and majesty, are united for evermore; who in the bosom of the Father, before the worlds, on the cross of Calvary as the dying Lamb, and now on the throne of God as the King and Mediator, in eternity and time, in life and in death, is the one loving Brother in whom thou canst trust, the one almighty Friend

and Helper for all the weary children of men. Be, therefore, strong in him. Fear neither the fierceness of the flesh nor the roaring of the lion. He lives, and ye shall live; his life is the charter of yours. "Because I live, ye shall live also."

"If thou, O Saviour, still art nigh,  
Cheerful I live, and cheerful die;  
Secure when mortal comforts flee,  
I find a thousand worlds in thee."

#### IV. THE PANOPLY.

We come now, in verse 11, to the *panoply* and the wiles or methods; the defence of God's grace and the attacks of the devil.

*Put on, therefore, the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*

Observe here that the armor must be complete; ye must take the provision which divine mercy has provided for you, or ye cannot come off victorious in the battles of the faith. Ye must fight as the Captain of salvation orders if ye expect from him the rewards of victory. The self-willed, who fight in their own way and with their own weapons, can expect no crowns of glory from him. He gives the strength and he provides the armor. It is not only "the panoply," but "the panoply of God," in which the believer stands arrayed in the day of battle and of victory. It is from the armory of the great King, proved in many a hard encounter and always found a complete defence. The meaning is that the grace of God in Jesus Christ is sufficient to make an honest believer in the gospel pure, to keep him pure in the midst of all possible temptations, and finally to bring



him triumphantly, in spite of them all, into the kingdom and glory of God. This is the great idea of the passage, and surely it is worthy of its divine Author. The provision is sufficient for the journey, the armor is a perfect defence, the cross is the assurance of final triumph. *Τούτω νικᾷ*, "*Hoc signo vince.*" Under this banner we conquer still, as Constantine did in the days of old; and it is a glorious fact in the history of the Church, in all her persecutions from pagans and popes, that the strength of the living Head has been perfected in her weakness and the panoply of his providing more than sufficient for her protection and defence.

But what are these methods, or *wiles of the devil*, against which we are exhorted and enabled to stand? These are the stratagems of war, the attacks of the enemy, the various trials and temptations under which we feel so often the oppression of the old serpent, the accuser of the children of God. Observe the contrast which lies in these words "the whole armor of God" and "the wiles of the devil:" the armor is from God, and the wiles are from the devil. He is the liar from the beginning, and his kingdom is based upon darkness and lies; nor can it be effectually overturned but by the introduction of righteousness and truth. He is the tempter, having the experience of many thousand years to perfect his plans of deception and carry out his diabolical methods (*methodeias*) of delusion and death. Strong is he, as his names and his attributes demonstrate—the lion for his power, the dragon for his fierceness and the old serpent for his wiles. He has skill to lay his snares like a fowler, and superhuman energy to carry them into execution. He can boast of

an ancient and extensive kingdom in which paganism and papacy, Islam and polytheism, image-worship, angel-worship and hero-worship, are some of the culminating points. All these are but the garniture of his incarnated personality, the draperies that surround the shrine of his worship, the courts, alleys and chambers of imagery in his temple, where the impure and the idolatrous continually perform their service. See where his wiles lead. The four great temptations before which so many have fallen, and do fall continually, are *distrust, presumption, ambition, idolatry*; and it is remarkable that the tempter tried every one of them in the temptation of our Lord (Matt. iv.). He begins modestly by suggesting some doubts, and then, through the intermediate stages of presumption and ambition, leads his victorious way to the worship of the devil—to fall down and worship me.

Put on the armor quickly, brother, for the time is pressing and the danger at hand. His wiles are many, and there is no defence but in the wounds of Jesus. Take, then, the panoply which God has provided, and stand fast against the wiles of the devil.

#### V. THE WRESTLE.

*For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places (ver. 12).*

*Flesh and blood* here does not mean simply "men" or "human nature," as many modern commentators assert, but *fallen, corrupt* humanity as opposed to the righteousness and truth of the gospel. *Flesh and blood* are the human enemies of every name and kind. The

Jews and the Gentiles, the world and its lusts, the law of the members that wars against the law of the mind, the temptations and sorrows to which, for the sake of Christ, we are subjected,—all these are our inveterate enemies, and we are called upon to resist and subdue them: but our *main* struggle is with greater antagonists than these. There is a kingdom of darkness to be abandoned, a prince of the power of the air to be resisted, the god of this world to be contended against; and this part of the contest, being the hottest and keenest, is, by way of emphasis, called “the wrestle.” (See 2 Cor. iv. 4; Col. ii. 15; Luke xxii. 53; John xii. 31; xiv. 30; Col. i. 13.)

What, then, do we gather from these and similar passages as to the nature of the kingdom of darkness?

(1) That there is a spiritual world containing two great departments, as the visible does—the good and the bad; the fallen angels under Satan their head, and the holy angels who kept their first estate; that sin, the fearful poison of the old serpent, has shed its virus far and wide in the invisible world also. The great kingdom of Jehovah is divided, the oneness of the universe, visible and invisible, is broken up, and Satan claims a portion and a kingdom in both.

(2) There are various ranks and degrees in the diabolical kingdom, designate d by the terms “principalities,” “powers,” “world-rulers” and “spirits of wickedness.” We cannot from the words settle the exact hierarchy, but we may suppose they are all headed up under Satan, the prince of the devils or demons. They are his ministering spirits, as the holy angels are God’s (Heb. i. 14). There is but one *diabolos*—devil or Satan—

according to the Scripture, who is called also the tempter (Matt. iv. 1-11; Acts v. 3; 1 Cor. v. 7) and the destroyer (Rev. ix. 11), and many other names and titles which show forth the corruption and malignity of his nature. He stands, therefore, alone, the one great head and chief of the fallen creation, the first mover of evil in the universe, and on whom the most fearful vengeance of Jehovah must rest. His servants and ministers are never called *devils*, but angels of the devil (Matt. xxv. 41; Rev. xii. 7, 9; ix. 14) and unclean spirits or evil spirits (Matt. x. 1; xii. 43, 45; Luke vii. 21; xi. 24; Eph. vi. 12). The most common appellation, however, is *daimon*, or *daimonion*—viz., “demon” (rendered improperly “devil” in our translation)—which is found in the Gospels nearly fifty times and in the other scriptures very frequently (James ii. 19; Rev. xviii. 2; Acts xvii. 18; 1 Cor. x. 20, etc.). These demons, therefore, with their head and ruler the devil, are the principalities, powers and world-rulers mentioned in our text against whom we are called upon to wrestle.

(3) It may not be uninteresting to mention some of the qualities, attributes and offices of these enemies of God and of his Christ. They are fallen, apostate spirits or angels (Jude 5, 6; 2 Pet. ii. 4); they are unclean, wicked spirits (Matt. x. 1; Luke vii. 21); they—head and members, Satan and his angels—are the authors of death (in whatever sense you take Heb. ii. 14), the inflictors of sickness and disease, and, generally speaking, the oppressors of mankind (Acts x. 38); they tempt into apostasy and idolatry by lies and delusions, by signs and wonders of falsehood (2 Thess. ii. 9; John viii. 44); and their special delight seems to be the pos-

session of the souls and bodies of men. This is the kingdom of darkness into which sin has cast us, and it is from this the divine Redeemer descended from heaven to deliver us (1 John iii. 8; Matt. xiii. 38; John viii. 44). As to their locality or dwelling-place, we gather the following facts from Scripture. They inhabit the air, the ærial heavens, probably that they may be near the human race, the object of their malignant hatred. Hence Lazarus was borne by angels (as through an enemy's country) into Abraham's bosom; hence Satan is called the prince of the ærial hosts (Eph. ii. 2); so that the space between the earth and the starry heavens is for the time being the camp and the headquarters of the devil. This gives force and significancy to the words of our passage (Eph. vi. 12): "Our wrestle is against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits" (Greek, neuter plural taken collectively; *Die Geisterschaft*, see Winer, sect. 34) "in the ærial regions." (Comp. Matt. vi. 26; Col. i. 4; 2 Thess. i. 3.) Hence Satan is seen falling like lightning from heaven, and Michael and his angels make war with the devil and his angels in heaven—viz., in the ærial regions (Luke x. 18; Rev. xii. 7-10). They are represented as cast down into the abyss of darkness, the bottomless pit, *Tartarus* (2 Pet. ii. 4), where they are reserved under chains of darkness unto the judgment of the great day. They are under the command and control of God; so that the range of their operations and the length of their chain are owing entirely to his permission. They are sometimes represented as inhabiting desolate ruins and the waste places of wildness and horror; hence the unclean spirit,

when cast out of a man, walketh through desolate places (Matt. xii. 43) and findeth no rest anywhere. Hence Babylon wasted and overthrown, the infernal papacy leveled to rise against the saints of God no more, is to become the habitation of devils (demons) (Rev. xviii. 2). The literal Babylon is (according to Isa. xiii. 21) become the habitation of *schirim* (Septuagint, "demons;" De Wette, *Waldteufel*, "wood-demons"), who hold their hell-dance in the ruins thereof. So also the demons led the demoniacs into the tombs (Matt. viii. 28) as the residence they best liked, for the air of corruption is the breath of life to a devil. The future and final habitation of the devils and of the damned seems to be Gehenna (Matt. v. 22, 29; x. 28; xviii. 9; xxiii. 15, 33; Mark ix. 43, 47; Luke xii. 5; James iii. 6), the place of material torment after the resurrection of the dead, called in the Apocalypse the lake of fire (xx. 14, 15), where the beast and the false prophet are and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. Let this brief notice of Scripture demonology suffice for the present.

## VI. THE POSITION OF THE BELIEVER.

*Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day; and having done all, to stand* (ver. 13).

The evil day here spoken of is not the day of battle as such—for that, through the help of God, may be a glorious day—it is the day of anguish and persecution, when the devil puts forth all his might and his wiles to lead away the Church from the Rock on which she rests. The evil day, in the largest sense, corresponds with the present age of the world, where Satan rules

(Eph. ii. 2, Greek), the "last time" of St. John, the time of Jacob's trouble, the night of the Church's fasting in the absence of the Bridegroom (Matt. ix. 15). But our translation is not the most natural one. The meaning seems to be, "And, having vanquished all your enemies, stand forth as victors on the field of battle" (*Das Feld behalten*, Luther; *Alles überwältigend, bestehet*, De Wette), for that is the meaning of the military expression; *στειλαί*, *stare tanquam triumphatores* (Zanch.), "stand forth as victors, as the warriors of Christ."

This is the believer's position. He is not always engaged in the act of fighting; the flesh is crucified with the Lord when he died, the world is conquered by the victory of faith, the old man is buried in the waters of baptism. Our position is that of the victor who has prostrated his enemies, and now his business is *to keep them down*. Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God; mortify, *therefore*, your members which are upon the earth. Your enemies of every kind—the world, the flesh and the devil—are *conquered*, overthrown in the act of believing, and henceforth your only active service is to walk over the field and keep them from again rising up. This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith.

## VII. THE GIRDLE.

*Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness.* (ver. 14).

On the girdle (the Greek *zone*, the Hebrew *ezor* and *chagor*), see 2 Kings i. 8; Matt. iii. 4; x. 9; Mark i. 6; vi. 8; Acts xxi. 11; Rev. i. 13; xv. 6.

From these and similar passages we learn that the

girdle was used to strengthen and support the body; as a purse to carry money in (Matt. x. 9); also for swords, daggers, pistols, knives, keys, inkhorns, etc. It assists women to carry their children, and without it there could be no speed in running, no alacrity in labor or in war. The girdle is therefore first mentioned, as being the most important; and the girdle that can sustain us is the truth of God. It is of cloth or of leather or of velvet, and sometimes it is studded with the richest jewels. Harless errs egregiously in thinking the girdle is used only for ornament. On the contrary, it is the most useful and necessary part of the dress. It binds all together, and is, therefore, well compared to *truth*, which is the cement of the living Temple, the blood in the body and the strong band that unites us to God and to one another. It strengthens the loins and braces the whole frame for active field-service, like truth in the inward parts, by which the Church has been made victorious over her enemies since the day of Pentecost. If ye, then, are determined to be soldiers of the cross, put on the girdle of truth. Truth is the source of your victory and strength. Jehovah is the God of truth, Jesus is the way, the truth and the life, and the saints who follow him are girt about with truth.

#### VIII. THE BREASTPLATE.

*Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness (ver. 14).*

But what is the *breastplate*—the thorax, cuirass, *lorica*? It is the breastplate of righteousness, which covers the heart and the more vital parts of the body



(Homer, *Iliad* iii. 332). In 1 Thess. v. 8 it is said to be of faith and love. This righteousness of Christ, which is imputed to the believer and received by faith (for this is referred to afterward and besides the righteousness of Christ), is rather a garment for the whole body than a defence of a single part. Perhaps the meaning here is best expressed by "justice," and the sense will be this: The war in which you are engaged is just and holy, for it is nothing else than the subjugation of the world to the Son of God; it is just and right that every creature should submit to his sceptre, and the assurance of this will be a breastplate to shield you from the thrusts of the enemy. "Justice" is engraven on our breastplates, and we will never lay down our arms till the enemy is overthrown, till the beast and the false prophet are in the lake of fire and the devil in the bottomless pit (Rev. xix. and xx.). Sin has no *right* to reign in us or over us; Satan can establish no claim over the purchased possession; there is no absolute right in hell for any of the sons of men; and therefore, with the love of justice in our hearts, we go forth to do battle against the principalities and the powers of darkness.

#### IX. THE SHOES.

*And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace* (ver. 15).

The *shoes*—*sandalia*, "sandals" (Mark vi. 9; see Acts xii. 8)—are said to be the preparation of the gospel of peace. The sandals which you wear are the alacrity of gospel love—not the costly shoes which are worn in luxurious houses, but the traveling-sandals by which you are at all times ready to go forth into the

highways and hedges to preach the gospel. This shows the nature of the war: it is the triumph of light over darkness, of justice over tyranny, of the kingdom of righteousness and peace over the king and the kingdom of all the enemies of God (Isa. v. 27). These are the swift messengers that are to bear to all nations the story of divine mercy and love; the martyr-heroes who through blood and persecution, and death itself, show forth the value of the gospel of peace and the unconquerable vigor which it inspires; these are the warriors of the cross, girded for the battle, in all things fully prepared, who without hesitation or fear shall bear onward the standard of the cross into all nations and languages, singing as they go,

“Waft, waft, ye winds, his story,  
And you, ye waters, roll,  
Till, like a sea of glory,  
It spreads from pole to pole.”

Observe well, brother, in passing, that sweet word, the *gospel of peace*. It is the good-will of God that you should have peace—peace in Jesus, peace through the blood of the cross. He is the very God of peace; Jesus is the Prince of peace, and his blood is the seal of peace. The enmity is removed in the cross; the breach is healed, and you have peace. Oh, sweet and comforting word for thee and me! Love conquers all things—his love to thee and me.—Then this God of peace—the great and mighty God—thought of me?—Yes, yes, brother, of thee too; and Jesus left heaven for thee and me—yea, died on the cross for thee and me.—I can hardly believe it. I sink under the burden of divine love; my very faith is terri-

fied at the immensity of the eternal mercy. O God, strengthen and enlarge my fainting reason, that I may comprehend with all saints the dimensions of thy love. Lord, I believe! Help thou mine unbelief.

But observe, if you please, some of the uses of the shoes, and see that you fully realize them. The way is often slippery, and the sandals enable you to *keep ground* and make progress on your homeward journey. This is surely the intent of the gospel. It gives us firmness of purpose to do the will of God. Here we find a noble preparation, a joyous alacrity in following the way of holiness and fighting the battles of the faith. It is a superhuman power let down into our world to stay the rush and ruin of a fallen creation and turn the soul of man into the fellowship of God. The gospel prepares by inward peace for encountering outward storms. Be the way rough or smooth, thorny or stony, up hill or down hill, all is alike to him who has his feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. His feet are ready for all roads and all weathers; the breastplate, like Aaron's, glitters on his bosom; and under the accoutrement of the panoply of God the heart of the warrior burns with unquenchable fire and invincible courage. He is ready for anything. Life is dear, for he has a work to accomplish for his Master; death is dearer still (Phil. i. 23), for it brings him to his Lord; poverty is sacred, for it makes him like his King, who had not where to lay his head; riches are to him the gift of God, to enable him to minister to the necessities of the saints; all things are his and minister to his welfare for the preparation of the gospel of peace, which blesses all and sweetens all.

“ Lasst uns nicht ermatten  
 Unter seinem Schatten  
 Unter seinem Thron!  
 Wirket weil ihr lebet  
 Betet helfet und gebet  
 Für den Menschensohn!

“ Jesus lebt!  
 Das Haupt erhebt  
 Brüder die ihr ihn erkennet  
 Seinen Namen nennet!” \*

### X. THE SHIELD OF FAITH.

*Above all, taking the shield of faith, whereby ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked* (ver. 16).

Instead of *above all* Lachmann reads “in all,” *in omni opere* (“in every operation”)—a reading which Jerome must have followed: *in omnibus sumens scutum fidei* (“in all things taking the shield of faith”); but the authorities are decidedly in favor of the common reading, *above all*.

But what, then, is the idea attached to the two words, *above all*, in the simple sentence, “Above all things, take the shield of faith”? They may very well mean, *In addition* to all these, take the shield of faith (Meyer), and in this sense Bloomfield and others take them; but

\* “Should the way be dreary,  
 Let us never weary:  
 Jesus reigns above.  
 Work while ye are living,  
 Praying, helping, giving,  
 For Him whose name is love.

“ Jesus liveth, who was dead;  
 Lift, lift up your head!  
 Ye who knew him, sons of God,  
 Spread his glorious name abroad!”

surely this is unnatural, as there are others to be assumed afterward. Others take *above* or *upon* in the sense of "over," and then you have this idea: Over all these various pieces take the shield of faith—not, indeed, the *aspis*, or serpent-formed, but the *thurcos*, or broad, door-shaped, shield, which will hide and defend the whole body. But this gives a poor, weak, material signification and could hardly be the mind of the apostle, who glories in grand and spiritual sentiments. Far nobler to say with Luther (*vor allen Dingen*) and others, Above all things, more necessary than all, it is that ye take the shield of faith; and the reason is given: That ye may "be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked" (one, that is the devil). This gives faith the importance which it had in the mind of the apostle, as well as strength and consistency to the passage. This is not the faith in miracles, nor even the faith which works miracles, but the living faith in the Redeemer without which it is impossible to please God. It is the justifying faith (*fides salvifica*) by which we receive Jesus Christ and rest upon him as he is offered to us in the gospel (John i. 12). It is not the reception of certain opinions into the mind, be they orthodox or otherwise, but a holy, confidential reliance on the power, promises and love of God as revealed to mankind in the person and the work of Christ. It is a holy, joyous conviction and assurance of Jehovah's love, which the Spirit of God works in the heart sometimes by the promises and sometimes by the preaching of the word, sometimes by the events of Providence and sometimes with all or without any of these, according to his own good pleasure.

This faith is based upon the faithfulness of God, and

roots itself most deeply in the person and the work of Christ. It is in a certain sense supernatural, being the operation of God and leading the soul into supernatural and immortal hopes. It is a new organ or sense by which the soul can return to the way of holiness and hold communion with her God (Rom. v. 2)—an ear that can hear the music of the skies; an eye that can see in the cross more than the worth of worlds; a mouth to feed pleasantly on the spiritual manna; a hand ready to receive *gratis* from the Lord all the blessings of time and eternity. It is the great, if not the only, bond of union between man and his Maker, which in a manner worthy of God and ennobling to man opens up a way through the flaming cherubim to the tree of life; which, uniting us with our Father and all his family—with the Son of God the Redeemer and the Holy Ghost the Quickener—gives to our sorrowful condition the strength, wisdom and beauty of God; which, opening up in all directions channels between the Church and her Head, brings her into the possession of his manifold fullness, out of which she receives now, according to the measure of faith, the requisite outfit for her pilgrimage—the manna, the pillar, the water from the rock—and out of which she shall never cease to draw fresh supplies while eternally approaching the Ineffable, though still at infinite distances she continues her starry way through the ages of eternity.

This faith works by love and purifies the heart. It is a saving, holy, sanctifying, sin-conquering, Christ-appropriating faith. It staggers not at difficulties, trembles not before enemies, sinks not in the floods of many waters, fears not to confront tyrants, Antichrists

and devils. It removes all mountains, brings distant events near, realizes while in the flesh the promises of future glory, joyfully makes acquaintance with bonds, prisons, persecutions, tortures and death itself for the Redeemer's sake. It seeks and finds him ever the Lamb of God in all things; so that the rock and the river, the trees of the woods and the fruitful fields, the stars of the night, the sun in the mid-heaven above and the light in the circumambient air all, testify of him and tell us the story of his love. This faith kills us and makes us alive to God, humbles us to the dust and exalts us to the skies, overwhelms us with afflictions and sustains us with abundant consolations. It suits all ages, generations and conditions of mankind; for by it the young and the old, the ignorant and the learned, the civilized nations and the semi-savage barbarians, have equal liberty of access to God, may equally triumph over the impediments and restrictions of nature and rejoice in the prospect and assurance of glory.

Take the shield of faith, brother; it was made for thee. It fits thy breast. It is needed against the fiery darts. It is fireproof, tried and found good by prophets, apostles and the glorious army of the martyrs. The shield of Achilles, of which Homer speaks so much,\* is not to be compared with the shield of the Christian warrior, which, as to its material, is not made of wood or of bull-hides or of iron, but of *faith*, the most ethereal, elastic substance known on earth, and able to quench, not the burning, combustible maleoli of the ancients (*Domus plena maleorum ad urbis incendia comparatorum*, Cicero *pro Mill.* 24), which De Wette

\* Γ 347-349, 356, 357, Ε 300, Η 250, 251, Α 434, Ν 160, 264, etc.

thinks were known to the Hebrews also (Ps. x. 13), or the poisoned arrows which drink up the spirit (*Ungere tela manu, ferrumque armare veneno*), but the fiery darts of Satan, which we may say, with the apostle James, are set on fire of hell (James iii. 6).

We observe here, also, the union between the will of God and that of the creature in the salvation of the soul. The shield, like the panoply, is given by God, but we are required *to hold it up*; the shoes, the girdle and the whole armor are provided by the King, but we are required to put them on and prove them. This shows the harmony between the human responsibility and the divine sovereignty: *he gives faith, but we believe*; he provides the armor, but we must fight the battle; Jesus is ascended to give repentance, yet repentance is our own act, and our tears of sorrow are sincerely shed; the Holy Spirit works in us both to will and to do of his own good pleasure, yet for that very work we are rewarded with heaven. One will must pervade the creation—even the will of God; one life must circulate in the body, one sap in the vine; one cement must bind together the temple of God; one spirit—even the spirit of faith—must pervade all the armies of the Captain of salvation.

## XI. THE HELMET.

*And take the helmet of salvation* (ver. 17).

This helmet of salvation is (in 1 Thess. v. 8) the hope of salvation, and in this sense it is to be taken here. The *soterion* ("salvation") is a neuter and rarely used in Scripture (Luke ii. 30; iii. 6; Acts xxviii. 28; Eph. vi. 17), while the feminine form, *soteria*, is used very often. It is certainly remarkable that, while Paul



constantly uses the latter, he never uses the former save in this one instance, and De Wette argues from this that Paul was not the author of the Epistle to the Ephesians; but surely an author may vary his words as he pleases?

But what is this helmet? It is the *hope of salvation*. "Hope" refers to and embraces the future, as "memory" does the past; and these two faculties place us, Janus-like, looking two ways—standing, as it were, on the bridge of time between the eternities. The food of memory is history, on which it fastens, devouring all the treasures of God's past dealings with mankind—his providence and his grace, the wonders of his power and the still greater wonders of his love. The proper food of hope is prophecy and promise, by which the golden doors of futurity are partially opened; and those to whom God has given eyes to see may get eagle-glances into the glories of eternity—foretastes of the blessedness which God has prepared for the righteous. Take away the promises and the prophecies of Scripture—the succors of grace in death and the glories beyond the grave, the overthrow of Antichrist and the coming of the Lord—and every man, being left without guidance, will become his own prophet and shape out a future for himself, as the heathen did, for till we cease to be human we must anticipate and provide for the future. Nor can hope ever be extinguished while memory remains a faculty of the mind: we cannot cease to hope, even as we cannot cease to remember; and to supply both these sides of our being with clothing and nutriment the divine Wisdom has given us history and prophecy, by which the two eternities which meet in us—the past and the future, the work done and the work to be done,

the cross of Christ and the crown of glory—are borne in and fill the soul with all their tranquillizing and sanctifying solemnities.

Memory hinges around the bleeding cross. Oh how lovingly, mournfully, joyfully, does it linger there, finding sweet every object and dear every spot which reminds us of Him! With burning hearts we survey the Holy City, the type of the heavenly; the brook Kedron, which he so often passed over; the old olive trees of Gethsemane, where he drank for us the bitter cup of anguish; the temple-area, where he so often taught the people; the tomb where he is supposed to have lain; and the Mount of Olives, from which, in blessing his disciples, he ascended into heaven—on which, also, his feet shall once more stand when he comes again as the Judge and the Avenger. Oh how dear—how *very* dear—to memory are these scenes of more than mortal love and anguish! Indeed, the poor weak heart faints and breaks under the pressure of such divine mercy and goodness. Here he lived, labored and died for me. He! Oh, it is Jesus, and none but he, the Son of the Highest, and yet the Virgin's Son! God manifest in the flesh! God over all, blessed for ever! He, then, thought of *me*—nay, came to see me. From the throne of the Omnipotent, from the bosom of the Father almighty, he came *here* to seek and to save *me*. Oh, is this all true? Is it possible that such ocean-fullness of love should flow in around *me*, a poor wretched, sinful, dying worm? It is indeed; it is all true; and now I know what is worth all knowledge besides—that GOD IS LOVE. Such is the field from which memory gathers her treasures.

Nor is hope less important or less active. I believe,

indeed, it is more active and embraces a still wider range of vision, in which, also, the objects are both more numerous and more gorgeous. In both one conspicuous object occupies the foreground, even the adorable person of our Lord Jesus Christ; but oh how different does he appear to the eye of hope! Not any more the sin-bearing Lamb of Calvary, but the life-giving Head of the Creation; not crowned with thorns and arrayed in a mock purple robe, but invested with the splendor and the majesty of God; not the God-Man any longer, but the Man-God for evermore; not the Servant, but the Master; not the Burden-Bearer of creation, but the Sceptre-Bearer whose kingdom is over all and shall have no end.

“Lo! he comes, in clouds descending,  
Once for favored sinners slain;  
Thousand, thousand saints attending  
Swell the triumph of his train:  
Jesus comes on earth to reign.”

These are the two poles around which revolve memory and hope—the coming of Christ in the flesh, and his coming in glory; and they both centre, like everything great and good and holy, in the person of the Mediator, in whom alone, as creation’s Head and Unit, the past, the present and the future, all depths of suffering love and mercy as well as all purposes of blessedness and glory, are summed up and harmonized. Hence *elpis* (“hope”) occupies such a conspicuous place in the word of God. It occurs in the New Testament more than fifty times, and is often, as in our text, connected with salvation. Thus we are saved by hope (Rom. viii. 24), which is explained to be the adoption—to wit, the redemption—of the body; and this great act of divine

power is called the hope of Israel, for which Paul joyfully suffered bonds (Acts xxviii. 20). Hope is in every way connected with the advent of Christ as the event to which the eye of the bride should ever be directed, for which we are to long and watch and wait patiently with our loins girded and our lamps burning, that we may be counted worthy to escape the things that are coming on the earth and to stand before the Son of man (Luke xxi. 36). His coming in glory is called the blessed hope (Tit. ii. 13), inasmuch as it contains in it all the elements which constitute the future blessedness of the Church of Christ. This is the helmet of salvation which we are expected to take for the battles of the faith, and its efficacy has been proved in many a well-fought field.

Read the history of any particular Church, as the Church of Scotland, or the history of the Church universal, and you will find that in times of persecution and trial the believer puts on this helmet. "Come, Lord Jesus!" is the cry of the martyr-church, and our ceasing to cry "Come!" shows that the bride is becoming the harlot (Prov. vii. 6-22) as she seeks to make this her rest. It is the struggling soul full of the hope of salvation that cries,

"O Jesu, meine Wonne,  
Komm bald und mach dich auf!  
Geh' auf du Lebensonne  
Und fördere deinen Lauf.

"O Jesu, mach ein Ende  
Und führ' uns aus dem Streit;  
Wir heben Haupt und Hände  
Nach der Erlösungszeit."\*

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\* "O Jesus, my ecstatic joy,  
Come quickly! rise!

Lift up your heads, ye weary and heavy-laden, ye persecuted for righteousness' sake, for the Avenger comes quickly and your redemption draweth nigh. Are ye enduring a great fight of afflictions, like the Hebrews (Heb. xi. 32-38)? Then put on this helmet of salvation, as they did, and patiently do the will of the Lord that you may receive the promise: "For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." Are ye mourning over departed friends whom silently and with tears ye have laid in the narrow house? Then put on this helmet and say with the persecuted Thessalonians, "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him" (1 Thess. iv. 14). Are ye worldly, money-loving men to whom this world is all in all? Ye should put on this helmet quickly, for the Lord is coming in flaming fire, and all that ye at present delight in shall be burnt up. Ye have no hope of salvation; his coming shall bring you only anguish and despair as ye hear the words, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

"Where, where for safety shall the guilty flee,  
When consternation turns the good man pale?"

"Quid sum miser tunc dicturus!  
Quem patronum rogaturus  
Cun nec justus sit securus?"

Ascend, thou life-giving Sun,  
And advance in thy course.

"O Jesus, make an end of our sorrows,  
Lead us out of the conflict!  
We lift up head and hand  
For the time of redemption."

“Rex tremendæ majestatis!  
 Qui salvandos salvas gratis,  
 Salva me, fons pietatis.”\*

But for the faithful, believing people of God the glorious advent is the helmet which crowns and completes the whole armor of God. Then we shall see Him whom unseen we loved, and we shall be *with* him and like him in his glory, for we shall see him as he is. We shall mingle with the saints and the angels of God, with the prophets, apostles and martyrs of Jesus, around the throne, where sin and separation and pain and death shall trouble our blessedness no more. This is the Father's house, the New Jerusalem, of which David Dixon has sung so sweetly in his noble canticle beginning—

“O mother dear, Jerusalem,  
 When shall I come to thee?  
 When shall my sorrows have an end?  
 Thy joys when shall I see?”

“O happy labor of God's saints!  
 O sweet and pleasant soil!  
 In thee no sorrow can be found,  
 No grief nor care nor toil.”

Oh, surely this is the hope of salvation, the house and city of our God, where the Redeemer and the redeemed shall enjoy their rest and their glory together in the beauty and glory of the heavenly kingdom.

\* “What excuse shall I, a wretched sinner, make?  
 What patron shall I then flee to,  
 When even the righteous shall scarcely be saved?”

“King of tremendous majesty,  
 Who savest gratis those that are to be saved,  
 Save me, O thou Fountain of piety!”

“Hinc perenne tenent esse  
 Nam transire transit;  
 Inde virent, vigent, florent  
 Corruptela corrui,  
 Immortalitatis vigor  
 Mortis jus absorbit.” \*

Oh yes, my brother, when he comes all that the fond heart can desire shall come with him, and hence the cry of the whole groaning creation (Rom. viii. 22) and the cry of the redeemed Bride remain one and the same from the beginning: “Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

## XII. THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT.

*And the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God* (ver. 17).

Here, it is manifest, the genitive is quite different from the foregoing examples—breastplate of righteousness, shield of faith and helmet of salvation, in which righteousness is the breastplate, faith the shield and salvation the helmet; but the sword of the Spirit cannot mean that the Spirit *is* the sword, else there would not have been added the phrase “which is the word of God.” The sword of the Spirit means the sword which the Spirit gives, a very common use of the genitive and the same as in verse 11—the panoply which God furnishes to the warrior. The masculine pronoun stands for the feminine by what grammarians call “attraction” (see examples: Mark xv. 16; 1 Tim.

\* “Henceforth they shall possess a perennial existence,  
 For all that is transient has passed away;  
 Henceforth they shall flourish in ever-opening beauty;  
 All that is corruptible has sunk into corruption:  
 The vigor of immortality  
 Has absorbed the law of death.”

iii. 16; 1 John ii. 26), and can refer only to *sword*. Olsbhausen's attempts to refer it to *Spirit*, making the sword to be the Spirit and the Spirit the word, are worse than trifling. *Rema* never signifies "the Spirit of God," but "the word of God"—the word *spoken*, as distinguished from the *Logos*, the *personal* Word, who was in the beginning with God and was God, and became flesh for our redemption. *Rema* ("word") means the gospel, the evangelical doctrine (Acts v. 20), the word of faith (Rom. x. 8). There is no reason against, but every reason for, taking it here in its widest sense as referring to the whole Scripture. The Bible is the sword of the Spirit; it is inspired by him, and is "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. iii. 16).

This remarkable name of the Bible, "sword of the Spirit," teaches us much of the way and wisdom of God in his dealings with the children of men. What gave the Jews their valor, their compact unity, their wonderful tenacity and fortitude as God's witnesses both in grace and in apostasy? The sword of the Spirit alone. What was it in the hand of the apostolic Church which overturned the temples of paganism, smote to the dust the gorgeous systems of superstition consecrated by time and cemented by wealth, interest and victory, and finally planted the cross on the palace of the Cæsars? Nothing but the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

See these men! They seem poor and despised and forsaken, but they are the heroes of the faith and the chosen instruments of God. They are persecuted, and



can find no resting-place on earth; their heads fall in the market-place, and no man regards it; the lions and the wild beasts are let loose upon them in the theatres of the Roman empire; they are burned, they are sawn asunder, they are crucified like their Master and tormented with all kinds of tortures; yet they yield not in the fiery trial, they are not submerged in the surging waters, but, rising above pain and torment and death, they sow, in their tears and in their blood, the seeds of righteousness, which spring up into a harvest of saints and servants of God. This is the glorious army of the martyrs. What sustained them? The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

The sword which smote the pagan in his strongest entrenchments, which in the hands of Luther and the Reformers pierced to his centre the Antichrist of Rome and won for the suffering saints and the servants of God generally the liberty to worship God,—this is the sword which the Spirit is now sending into all nations to cut the cords which bind the heathen to their idols, the papists to their images, the Turks to their fanaticism and the Jews to their impenitency and unbelief. It is circulating among the hundred millions of British India, and the Dead Sea of China itself is now opening to the word of life; so that this fiery sword, the symbol of gospel warfare, is making the circuit of the habitable globe. Perish the attempt to stay the flaming sword in its course! Broken be the arm, papal or infidel, which would dare to lay restrictions on the word of God and deprive the perishing nations of their blood-purchased rights!

In the mean time, we may rest assured that the purposes of God in giving it shall be accomplished, what-

ever may be the opposition of men and of devils. In vain shall superstitious kings and their lackeys the popes seek to impede the progress of its saving truths. It is a sharp two-edged sword, cutting into the joints and marrow with the earnestness of truth, and therefore the lovers of darkness cannot bear it. It lays open our wounds as deeply as the malady reaches, and those who have rejected the Balm of Gilead do not like the torture of the necessary surgery. Others are of a different opinion, and esteem the word of God above all price. They find it just what they need—a height for every hollow, a balm for every wound, a sympathy for every sorrow in the poor sin-smitten heart of man. Its pages are varied and lovely as is the fairest landscape, but they always breathe of heaven; sprinkled with its thousand promises brighter than the stars, it draws out the deeper affections of the soul and centres them in the Sun of righteousness. Jesus in his temptation in the wilderness used this sword against the subtlety of the tempter, and so should the saints ever do, as it is the weapon which God has given in this our Christian warfare. It is the best defence of our families and our homes, of the faithfulness of our sons and the honor of our wives and daughters. It consecrates every circle of society where its influence is cherished, and brings forth from the hollowness and heartlessness, from the hypocrisies and formalities, of life something of the fragrance and verdure, the truth, fullness and beauty, of heaven. It consecrates everything, everywhere and always, to the service of God.

## XIII. THE WAY TO USE THE ARMOR.

*Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints* (ver. 18).

I do not connect this verse with the *receiving* the weapons, but with the right use of them; nor can I admit that the verse contains a tautology, much less a *drawling tautology*, as De Wette asserts. The words *prayer* and *supplication* are connected in Phil. iv. 6, and are by no means of the same signification. The former is the proper word to express our petitions to the supreme Being, and the latter may be addressed to both God and man; united, they show the fullness and the fervency with which we ought to express our wants and desires to God. The points to be attended to in this verse are the following:

(1) We ought to pray *always*—that is, at all proper times and places; we ought to be always in the spirit of prayer (see 1 Thess. v. 17; Luke xi. 1; xxi. 36; Rom. xii. 12; Col. iv. 2; 1 Pet. iv. 7). This steadies the faculties of the mind and makes us ready and willing, through God's assistance, to fulfill the divine will with reverence and godly fear. In the spirit of prayer and fellowship nothing can take us by surprise, nothing throw us off our guard, inasmuch as we feel ourselves surrounded by the love and the protection of God. Life and death, sorrows and troubles, are mere accidents which produce no essential change in our relations to God, and our only effort is "that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him" (2 Cor. v. 9).

(2) We ought to fight the good fight of faith with all prayer—that is, with all *kinds* of prayer and supplica-

tion. (Comp. 2 Cor. ii. 4; 2 Chron. vi. 19, in the Septuagint. Like the English, both the Hebrew and the Greek have similar expressions; the distinction is not always kept up.) These kinds may be such as private prayer, family prayer, social prayer, public prayer in the assemblies of the saints, vocal prayer for ourselves and for others, and mental silent prayer at all times and in all places. The object is to keep as unbroken as possible our conscious communion with God. When one way of access is shut up another way is opened, and our desire should be to avail ourselves of them all.

(3) Our prayers and our supplications should be in the *Spirit*—that is, in the power of the Holy Ghost, who is the inspirer and author of prayer (Rom. viii. 15-26; Gal. iv. 6). Some render it “in spirit”—viz., heartily, earnestly; but this is weakening the passage and utterly inconsistent with the mind and sentiment of the apostle (Rom. viii.). We are therefore to plead the promised assistance of the Holy Spirit that he may make our approaches to God holy and acceptable. *Through* the Son as Mediator, *by* or *in* the Spirit and *to* the Father is the appointed method of access to God (Eph. ii. 18). The prayer is awakened in the bosom of the Church by the Holy Ghost; it ascends to the heavens through the appointed Mediator and finds its end and home in the ear of the eternal Father, from whom all proceedeth and to whom all returneth. He is the Fountain-Head of love (John iii. 16), which can be shed forth on the fallen only in the way of mediation through the Son, and is only to be realized in the life and the heart of believers by the Holy Ghost.

(4) We are to *watch* and *persevere* and *supplicate* for all saints. This opens up to us the full mind of our Father regarding the use of the panoply which he gives. If we watch not against the temptations and attacks of the enemy, if we avoid not the occasions of sin and the ways of ungodly men, our prayers are mere hypocrisy and the whole armor will not profit us. No, brother; we must watch. The known evil we must avoid at all hazards; the sin which so easily besets us we must abandon, be it dear as the right eye or useful as the right hand; the known path of duty we must follow wherever it leads, and at whatever cost. We are walking amidst the snares of the fowler, and time and sin and evil customs and false brethren and the ungodly world seek to throw over us their deceitful entanglements. "What I say unto you, I say unto all. Watch." But we must *persevere* also, and continue asking, seeking, knocking, even unto the end. Religion is not the convulsive effort of a moment (though it often begins convulsively), but the calm, steady determination of a mind which knows what it is doing and has counted all costs. It is not the flashing of the lightning which rends the rocks and the trees, but the radiance of the sun which illumines the whole world with its splendors. "On! on! on!" is ever the cry of the pilgrim, however beaten back by the waves or impeded by the tempests of the deep, for he knows that the Jordan is before him and beyond it the many-mansioned house of his Father, where his heart and his treasure and his Saviour are. In this state of earnest struggle he is to pray for *all saints*. The believer should have neither party nor preferences save in the degrees of holiness to be found in the Church. He is

a part of the bride, he is a branch of the Vine, he is a member of the body, and his aspiration ever is that the number of the elect may quickly be completed and the glory of the Head shed over all the members. He knows there is but one temple, one Vine, one bride of the Lamb, one great, glorious, redeemed Church—the saints, *all saints*; and in his heart and in his supplication he can embrace them all. Names and parties go for nothing; he recognizes, with his Master, only two distinctions—saints and sinners, sheep and goats, the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness. This breaks the bonds of sectarianism and enlarges the soul into the dimensions of divine love; this lets into the darkness and littleness of our minds something of the expansive force of the hidden life which circulates through all saints and makes them eternally one in Christ Jesus. Those who have not made the trial do not know how hard it is to love and to pray for the saints who do not walk in the same paths with themselves, and the best way to get over this narrow-mindedness is to meditate much on the love of God, which, like light from the sun, flows forth abundantly, and in thus beholding the glory of the Lord we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory.

#### XIV. PRAYER FOR INDIVIDUALS.

*And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel (ver. 19).*

The heart of the apostle is not filled with anger against his persecutors, nor does he pray for vengeance upon the enemies of the Lord. He does not think of his danger, but of the testimony which he is to bear for

his Master. He is indeed confined, but his soul is free ; and, whether free or incarcerated, whether in Jerusalem or in Rome, his one aim is to proclaim to all men that gospel of grace which gives “liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound” (Isa. lxi. 1). He asks the prayers of the church, not for his liberation, but that *words* may be given him, that he may be filled to overflowing with the materials of the gospel history and qualified to utter it with demonstration and with power. He wants utterance.

What a gift is speech, language, oratory, discourse, especially when it concerns God or the Spirit of God or the incarnate Son, in whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily ! Paul wants utterance to tell out the great, big idea of God’s infinite love in Jesus Christ. It is not eloquence, but utterance. The thing is eloquent enough if you can only get it out—only get it uttered. Tell the tale of Jehovah’s love ; glory only in the cross ; pray for words—big, round, holy, burning words—that with open mouth and loving heart you may make known the mystery of the gospel. Give no thought to mere eloquence ; your place and your position speak for you. The prison is an eloquent place ; the stripes and the fetters speak for you ; the roaring of the lions is an eloquent voice, and the martyr’s prayer (Acts vii. 54-60) surpasses Tully, Demosthenes and Chatham.

But let us bridle the fancy and keep close to the text. Here, then, in our text we have the following important facts.

(1) That prayer—prayer on the part of the people as well as on the part of the pastor—is absolutely

necessary to the right preaching of the gospel in Christian congregations (Acts iv. 29; Col. iv. 3; 2 Thess. iii. 1). Without this the promised blessing cannot be expected; without this the preacher, the prisoner and the martyr lose a main part of their power. Love is the great uniter, and prayer is the offspring of love. When the people abound in prayer the minister will not lack utterance, and the result will be zeal for the glory of God and love to the souls of men. The highest office is the apostolic, and it did not deliver Paul from trials and dangers, but increased them greatly; nor, though he had constant fellowship with God and the Spirit of God miraculously dwelling in him, could he dispense with the necessity of prayer. The holier we are, the more we see and lament our vileness. Nearness to Christ, the Sun of righteousness, reveals the sin-spots on our white robes; and we may add that in proportion as we imbibe the spirit of our Master must we encounter the hatred and the opposition of the world.

(2) Boldness is a New-Testament virtue: the apostle wished to speak with *boldness*. Or you may connect *boldness* with the following clause, thus: "He worked with all boldness to make known the mystery of the gospel." (See Phil. i. 20; John vii. 4; Col. ii. 15; Acts ii. 29; iv. 29, 31; xxviii. 31.) This bold, earnest manner of stating the truth is in entire accordance with the nature and the claims of the gospel, which everywhere appeals to human guilt and the necessity of atonement and mediation. Life and death depend upon your words, O ye heralds of the cross! Crowns of glory or everlasting ruin are the alternatives placed before men. Be in earnest, as becomes such a message,



and proclaim with boldness the saving doctrines of the cross.

(3) The apostolic preaching—indeed, the Christian ministry generally—is appointed to *make known* the mysteries of the gospel. God is no longer the unknown and unapproachable God whose throne is surrounded with darkness and with terror. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, hath declared him; the fountains of salvation are opened to all, and the ministry of the Spirit is to make it known to mankind. The apostles were not appointed to be sacrificing priests, as the papists blasphemously pretend, but to make known the mysteries of the gospel. The gospel ministry is to teach, not to sacrifice, seeing Jesus has by one offering for ever perfected all that are sanctified. Paul will make known this mystery to all the world; there is no concealment, no preaching of the atonement with reserve, as the half papists among us would do.

Nor should the word *mystery* frighten any one, as if there were more mysteries in *grace* than in nature, in the redemption than in the creation of the world. There is, in reality, less mystery in the word than in the work of God. We know a great deal more about the resurrection of the dead, and the divine Persons of the Godhead, and the incarnation of Christ, and the Holy Spirit the Comforter, than we do about the eternity of God, the creation of the universe or the essence and the attributes of the human soul. As for the essence of matter, we know nothing about it. Mystery is not with us, as with the heathen, something which we are bound to conceal, but something which God has commissioned us to *make known*. Tell all the perishing there is eternal life for them in Jesus, but

think not to expound all its glories; proclaim upon all the winds of heaven the mystery of all mysteries—that God is love—but leave the everlasting ages to sound the depths of that ocean. Preach Jesus Christ and him crucified; tell forth the tale of his love to sinful men; and if they will not hear, proclaim it to the desert-winds. But still there remains much to be told—many of the depths and heights of redeeming love which we shall begin to understand only when, enlarged in our faculties and purified from all defilement, we arrive at the many-mansioned house of our Father in heaven.

#### XV. THE AMBASSADOR IN BONDS.

*To make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak* (ver. 20).

This is the same mystery for which he says (Col. iv. 3), "I am in bonds." (Comp. 2 Cor. v. 20.) For the gospel's sake I execute the office of an ambassador in a *chain*. The chain, the one chain, some take to be the chain with which he was bound to the soldier who guarded him; or the singular may be taken for the plural, as our translators have done, as simply designating his bondage (Acts xxviii. 20). Bengel has a fine thought here: "*Mundus habet legatos splendidos, Christus vincetos.*" Yes, indeed, it is true: "The world has splendid ambassadors, and Christ's are in bonds." Yet if ye consider it well, there is much to be envied in these despised messengers and ambassadors of the gospel. They can in their prisons sing songs of surpassing sweetness (Acts xvi. 25); sometimes, too, the radiance of heavenly light shines into the dungeon and

gilds their chains with glory (Acts xii. 7). They seem wonderfully composed in their afflictions, and, what is most remarkable, their temper is never embittered, nor do you hear any complaint out of their mouth. They seem to be denizens of some higher sphere where a perpetual serenity pervades all hearts; they turn the cheek to the smiter, and, like their Master, when dying under murderous hands breathe only the spirit of forgiveness and of love (Acts vii. 54-60). There seems to be in all this something truly wonderful and divine—something which the reason would prefer to the most splendid embassies. Behold Paul in the prison and Cæsar on the throne, and tell me which you would prefer to be. The Cæsars are dead and their decrees have perished, but Paul and his fourteen Epistles live and reign and fructify in the hearts of millions. Oh how much is moral excellence superior to external splendor! The pomp and the glory of the imperial throne are all gone, but the letter written in the dungeon of Rome is read by a third part of the human race.

The *hina* ("that") in the last clause of the verse is to be referred to verse 18, thus: "Praying that therein" (in the mystery of the gospel) "I may speak boldly as I ought to speak." All these afflictions, imprisonments and bonds are necessary concomitants of the gospel message, for love shown to the unloving is a consuming fire, entering into their bones and giving them no rest night or day. Yet is fire the purifying element in nature for the rougher and harder materials; and what are all the trials and all the temptations of this sinful life—the wrestlings with our enemies and the manifold persecutions which, whether at the

hand of paganism, papacy or infidelity, the gracious God allows to come upon us,—what are they all but the furnace from which, in his good time, all the faithful shall come forth pure and beautiful as the gold of the sanctuary, a holy and glorious Church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing?

#### XVI. CONCLUSION.—SALUTATION.

*But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things: whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts. Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen (ver. 21–24).*

The messenger of the apostle and bearer of this Epistle was Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord. He is mentioned in Acts xx. 4 as an Asiatic; in Col. iv. 7, “as a beloved brother, a faithful minister and fellow-servant in the Lord;” in 2 Tim. iv. 12 he is sent by Paul to Ephesus, and in Tit. iii. 12 to Crete. This is all we know of him, and it is quite sufficient to account for the want of individual salutations at the end of this Epistle, as if Paul had said, “I am well known to you all; I labored long among you at Ephesus; I know and love you all in the Lord Jesus; and, instead of mentioning particular names, I send you a brother who shall salute you all and tell my affairs—*the things that concern me.*”\*

\* For the use of the Greek phrase, see Phil. i. 12; Acts xxiv. 22; xxv. 14.

He shall tell you all particulars and comfort your hearts." He then sends his benediction to the brethren.

*Brethren* in the present day is a word that signifies much; in the days of the apostle it signified more. These holy brethren were the chosen witnesses for God in one of the most corrupt cities in the world the word of life had drawn together from the wastes of heathenism; they were the few against the many, the poor against the wealthy, the followers of the despised Nazarene against the multitude of powerful respectable citizens who could boast of Greek culture and a celebrated mythology. To be a brother you must give up much—name, relatives, fortune, friends, all that the world holds dearest—and, instead, be content with the consolations of the soul and the hopes of the life to come.

His first wish or prayer for them is *peace*—a sweet and most blessed fruit of the gospel. Jesus is the *Sar-shalom*, the Prince of peace; his gospel brings peace to the souls of distracted men; and the kingdom which we preach is a kingdom of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. He came with the angel-song of peace, and he ascended from the Mount of Olives leaving to the world that rejected him his benedictions of peace. This peace may be threefold, peace of conscience, peace with our fellow-men and peace with God—a peace looking inward, outward and upward.

And *love*. This is a diffusive principle—love to God and love to our fellow-creatures and (especially as Christians) love to Christ. Jesus is the true home of the heart, where all our sorrows can be treasured up and all our wants made known. He is the life of all our joys and the death of all our woes.

" Jesu, meines Lebens Leben ;  
   Jesu, meines Todes Tod ;  
 Der du dich für mich gegeben  
   In die tiefste Seelennoth,  
 In das äusserste Verderben,  
 Nur dass ich nicht möchte sterben.  
 Tausend, tausend mal, sei dir  
 Liebster Jesu, Dank dafür." \*

" We love him because he first loved us, and gave himself for us." Peace be to the brethren, and love with *faith*—that is, faith on the Lord Jesus Christ. But what is faith? The best human definition is this: " Faith is a saving grace, whereby we receive Jesus Christ, and rest upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel." Volumes have been written on the nature of saving faith without making it much clearer. It is the simplicity of the act that astonishes and perplexes us. Like the Syrian nobleman, we would do some great thing to obtain eternal life and cannot easily admit what is freely given us of God. Yet faith has many forms and is variously described in Scripture. It is simply believing the testimony of God; it is the sure confidence of things unseen; it is following the Lamb whithersoever he goeth; it is receiving and resting upon Christ; it is hearing the voice of our Father; it is seeing Him that is invisible; it is coming to Christ that he may give us rest. God sends us a gift, and faith *takes* it; God opens the fountain,

\* " Fount of life for ever flowing,  
   Death of death, I come to thee ;  
 Jesus, endless life bestowing,  
   Thou hast borne my agony,  
 Bitterest sorrow, sorest pain,  
 Life eternal to regain.  
 Thousand, thousand thanks to thee,  
 Jesus, for thy charity."

and faith drinks from it; God gives the manna, and faith gathers it; the cross is erected, faith looks up and we are healed. Faith takes God at his word and staggers not at difficulties, while it fixes its eagle-glance on the unseen realities of heaven. As the old monkish rhyme has it,

“Quid est Fides? quod non vides.  
 Quid est Spes? futura res.  
 Quid est Charitas? in hoc mundo raritas.”\*

These gifts of peace, love and faith are from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. The exposition of Grotius, “*Conjungit causam principem cum causa secunda*” (“He joins the primary with the secondary clause”), may be taken in a scriptural sense, as the love of God the Father is the source (John iii. 16) from which redeeming mercy flows; yet it ought never to be forgotten that all these actions of grace and beneficence, as well as all the attributes of the Godhead, are in the Scripture ascribed equally to the Father and the Son. Their glory is equal and their majesty coeternal. They are both everywhere in the Scripture presented to the believer as the objects of faith and love, trust and confidence, adoration and praise.

The apostle concludes with *grace*: “*Grace be with all them that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.*” Grace is connected with *God* (Col. iv. 18; 1 Tim. vi. 21; 2 Tim. iv. 22; Tit. iii. 15); with *Jesus Christ* (Rom. xvi. 20, 24; 1 Cor. xvi. 23; 2 Cor. xiii. 14; Gal. vi. 18; Phil. iv. 23; 1 Thess. v. 28; 2 Thess.

\* “Faith, what is that? an unseen somewhat.  
 What is Hope? a future thing, *a rope*.  
 What is Charity? in this world a rarity.”

iii. 18; Philem. 25); with *the Holy Spirit* (Heb. x. 29; 1 Cor. xii. 4). All is free grace in the matter of salvation. With this thought the apostle begins and with it he ends the Epistle; and well he may, for nothing sweeter than grace meets the anxious heart.

“Grace! ’tis a charming sound,  
Harmonious to the ear;  
Heaven with the echo shall resound,  
And all the earth shall hear.”

Here, then, in *grace*, in the last verse as at the beginning, we come to the fountain-head of all our hopes. Free and pure as the river of God it flows from the sanctuary above, and whosoever will may take of the water of life freely. His grace goes before you, follows you like the water from the rock, and encircles you at every step till you enter the promised glory.

“In Jesu ruht der Seel’ Verlangen,<sup>1</sup>  
Die ach! so müd von Sorg’ und Lust;<sup>2</sup>  
Sein Gnadenarm will mich umfassen,<sup>3</sup>  
Da lieg’ ich sanft an seiner Brust.<sup>4</sup>  
Ich liebe Jesu heren Namen;<sup>5</sup>  
Emanuel mein treur Hort!<sup>6</sup>  
Gleich Blütenhauch aus edlem Samen,<sup>7</sup>  
Wallt Jesu Nam’ von Ort zu Ort.”<sup>8\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Deut. xxxiii. 27.    <sup>2</sup> Matt. xi. 28.    <sup>3</sup> Song ii. 6.    <sup>4</sup> John xiii. 33.  
<sup>5</sup> 1 John iv. 19.    <sup>6</sup> Matt. i. 23.    <sup>7</sup> Song i. 3.    <sup>8</sup> Phil. ii. 9, 10.

Do we not love to linger at this fountain of grace?

\* “In Jesus Christ, the Rock of ages,  
The weary soul finds perfect rest,  
And when the tempest fiercely rages  
Reposes sweetly on his breast.  
I love the holy name of Jesus:  
It makes us strong, from danger frees us;  
Like gales from Araby the Blest,  
It sheds perfumes from east to west.”



Oh yes, we do, for we can say, "We too love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." His name is more to us than are a thousand worlds, and, like Paul, we desire to glory only in his cross.

Reader, we have now finished our travels together in this pleasant garden, and, like all others, we must part. To me this labor has not been a toil, and to thee may it not be unprofitable. Grace and peace be with thee! Amen!

**THE END.**





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